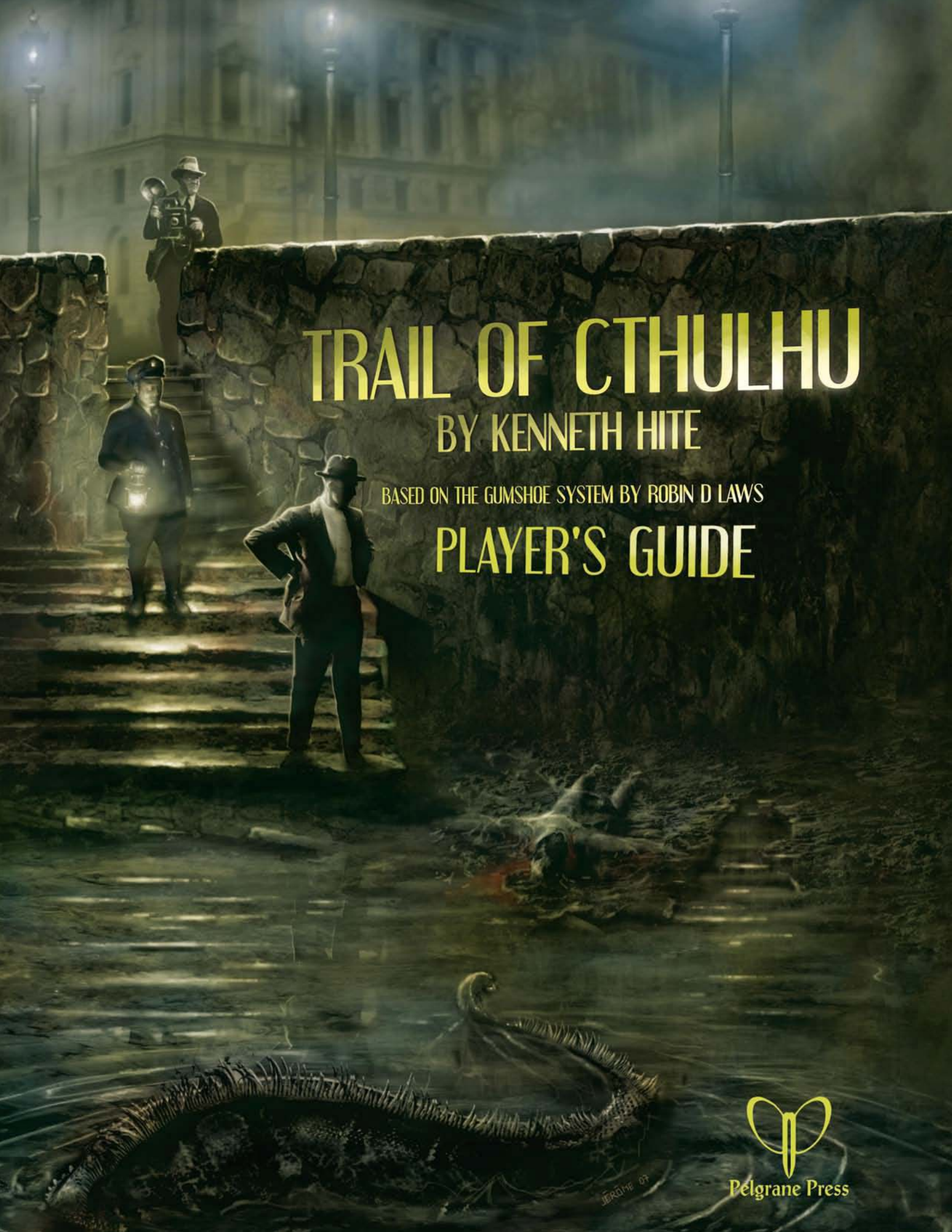
TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

BASED ON THE GUMSHOE SYSTEM BY ROBIN D LAWS

PLAYER'S GUIDE



Pelgrane Press

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

BASED ON THE GUMSHOE SYSTEM BY ROBIN D LAWS

Credits

Publisher: Simon Rogers

Written by: Kenneth Hite

GUMSHOE System: Robin D Laws

Layout: Jérôme Huguenin

Art: Jérôme Huguenin

GUMSHOE Guru: Robin D Laws

Editing and Additional Material: Simon Rogers

Based on: Call of Cthulhu by Sandy Petersen and Lynn Willis

Special thanks : Effie and Julia Huguenin, Léo and Pascal Quidault, Leonard Balsera

Playtesting: Adrian Price, Steve Dempsey, Wai Kien, Adrian Smith, Graham Walmsley, Alex Fradera, Dave, Polymancer Studios, Simon Rogers, Daniel Bayn, Danni Bayn, Chris Malone, Mark DiPasquale, Matthew Pook, Tim Barker, Louise Hayes, David Lai, Mike Shepard, Carla Jane Miller, Elizabeth Rees, Robert Mills, Donald F. Taylor III, Richard Hardy, Lynne Hardy, Frederic Moll, Fredrik Hansson, Jeff Campbel Jamie Michael, Joshua Ford, Marcus Ogawa, Lisa Marie Ogawa, Gil Trevizo, Henry de Veuve, Ronald Abitz, Steve Bartalamay, Alan Fountain, Peter Kessler, Wojciech “Alter” Kobza, Laurent Mollicone, Olivier Noël, Wayne O’Connor, Ghislain Morel, James Semple, Gabriella Semple, Dan Pusceddu, Olive Pusceddu, Axel Eble, Stefan Ohrmann, Martin Schrammm, Onno Tasler, Ralf Achenbach, William C Bargo Jr, Jacques Maurice Mallah, Donald F. Taylor III, Keith A Callison, Doug

© 2007 Pelgrane Press Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Published by arrangement with Chaosium, Inc. Trail of Cthulhu is a trademark of Pelgrane Press Ltd.

Contents

CREDITS 3

CONTENTS 4

INTRODUCTION 6
- Why This Game Exists 6
- Purist or Pulp or Both? 7

THE INVESTIGATOR 9
- OCCUPATIONS 9
  - Alienist 9
  - Antiquarian 10
  - Archaeologist 11
  - Artist 11
  - Author 12
  - Clergy 12
  - Criminal 13
  - Dilettante 13
  - Doctor 13
  - Hobo 14
  - Journalist 14
  - Military 15
  - Nurse 15
  - Parapsychologist 17
  - Pilot 17
  - Police Detective 17
  - Private Investigator 17
  - Professor 18
  - Scientist 18
- DRIVES 19
  - Adventure 19
  - Antiquarianism 19
  - Arrogance 20
  - Artistic Sensitivity 20
  - Bad Luck 20
  - Curiosity 21
  - Duty 21
  - Ennui 21
  - Follower 21
  - In the Blood 22
  - Revenge 22
  - Scholarship 22
  - Sudden Shock 22
  - Thirst for Knowledge 23
- BUYING ABILITIES 23
  - Occupational Abilities 23
  - How Many Points Should I Buy? 26
  - Ratings and Skill 27
- INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES 28
  - Accounting (Academic) 28
  - Anthropology (Academic) 28
  - Archaeology (Academic) 28
  - Architecture (Academic) 28
  - Art (Technical) 30
  - Art History (Academic) 30
  - Assess Honesty (Interpersonal) 30
  - Astronomy (Technical) 30
  - Bargain (Interpersonal) 30
  - Biology (Academic) 31
  - Bureaucracy (Interpersonal) 31
  - Chemistry (Technical) 31
  - Cop Talk (Interpersonal) 32
  - Craft (Technical) 32
  - Credit Rating (Interpersonal) 32
  - Cryptography (Academic) 34
  - Cthulhu Mythos (Academic) 34
  - Evidence Collection (Technical) 35
  - Flattery (Interpersonal) 35
  - Forensics (Technical) 35
  - Geology (Academic) 35
  - History (Academic) 37
  - Interrogation (Interpersonal) 37
  - Intimidation (Interpersonal) 37
  - Languages (Academic) 37
  - Law (Academic) 37
  - Library Use (Academic) 38
  - Locksmith (Technical) 38
  - Medicine (Academic) 38
  - Occult (Academic) 38
  - Oral History (Interpersonal) 39
  - Outdoorsman (Technical) 39
  - Pharmacy (Technical) 39
  - Photography (Technical) 39
  - Physics (Academic) 39
  - Reassurance (Interpersonal) 40
  - Streetwise (Interpersonal) 40
  - Theology (Academic) 40
- GENERAL ABILITIES 40
  - Athletics 40
  - Conceal 40
  - Disguise 41
  - Driving 41
  - Electrical Repair 41
  - Explosives 41
  - Filch 42
  - Firearms 42
  - First Aid 42
  - Fleeing 42
  - Health 43
  - Hypnosis 43
  - Mechanical Repair 44
  - Piloting 44
  - Preparedness 45
  - Psychoanalysis 45
  - Riding 45
  - Sanity 46
  - Scuffling 47
  - Sense Trouble 47
  - Shadowing 47
  - Stability 48
  - Sources of Stability 48
  - Stealth 48
  - Weapons 48
- SAMPLE CHARACTER 49
  - Trail of Cthulhu Character Sheet 49

CLUES, TESTS AND CONTESTS 51
- Clues 51
  - Gathering Clues 52
  - Spends and Benefits 54
  - Inconspicuous Clues 55
- Tests 56
  - Simple Tests 56
  - Piggybacking 57
  - Cooperation 58
- Contests, Chases, and Combat 58
  - Fighting 60
  - Other Dangers 68
- Stability, Sanity, and Madness 69
  - Losing Stability 69
  - Losing Sanity 74
  - Mental Illness 77
  - Refreshing Stability During A Session 79
- Recovery 80
  - Refreshing Investigative Ability Pools 80
  - Refreshing General Ability Pools 80
  - Refreshing Health 81
  - Refreshing Stability Between Adventures 81
  - Recovering Sanity 81
- Improving Your Investigator 82

TECHNOLOGY, WEAPONS, AND EQUIPMENT 83
- Vehicles 83
- Vehicle Table 86
- Aircraft Table 87
- Weapons 88
- Hardware and Sundries 89

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER 92
- TIPS FOR PLAYERS 92
  - Believe You Might Succeed 92
  - Justify Your Casting 92
  - Drives Drive You Forward 92
  - When Stuck, Look For More Information 93
  - Talk To People 93
  - Keep Moving Forward 93
  - Deputize Yourself 93

APPENDICES 94
- Character Sheet 94

INDICES 97

Contents

FOREWORD

This Player's Guide for Trail of Cthulhu includes everything you need to play, Trail of Cthulhu. You have what you need to create an investigator, the GUMSHOE system, equipment lists, and player tips. All the secrets of the Mythos, the gods, creatures, historical background and other GM-specific information have been removed with all the skill of an Elder Thing performing an autopsy.

LICENSE

You may print a copy of this document for your personal use, and replace that copy if it is damaged. You may not reproduce or resdistribute this PDF to anyone. You may transfer you license to another person. You must notify Pelgrane Press of this license transfer and include the details (name and email address) of the person to whom you are transferring the license. If you transfer the license for this PDF, you must destroy your printed copy of the PDF, and delete the PDF from your system.

Introduction

In the mists of prehistory, alien gods and monsters fell to Earth and warred over our planet, unleashing cosmic science and inconceivable powers until continents sank and seas boiled. Exhausted or defeated, They fell into an aeons-long slumber, and the human race goes about its unknowing business over Their graves and tombs. But there are those who want to seek out the fragments of the lore They left behind. Those who want to learn the secrets of the stars, and the true names of the dimensions. Those who want the dead gods' powers. Those want to wake Them up.

You are among the few who suspect the truth – about the mad gods at the center of the universe, about the Great Old Ones who dream of clearing off the Earth, about the extra-terrestrials who use mankind in their experiments, about the ancient legends of undying evil that are all coming true. You have to make sure nobody else ever finds out — or the world will wake up screaming.

You have to keep the doors to the Outside from swinging open – no matter what the cost in life or sanity. You have to piece together the clues from books bound in human skin, from eviscerated corpses covered in ichor, and from inscriptions carved on walls built before humanity evolved. You have to go wherever the answers are, and do what needs to be done.

But do you dare to follow … the trail of Cthulhu?

Why This Game Exists

This game exists in order to adapt the greatest RPG of all time, *Call of Cthulhu,* to a different rules set, the GUMSHOE engine. Why on Earth would we do a thing like that? First of all, part of what makes *Call of Cthulhu* so great is its theme, taken from the cosmic despair of the greatest horror writer of the 20th century, HP Lovecraft. We kept that. Second, part of what makes *Call of Cthulhu* so great is its deliberate decision to make characters increasingly vulnerable to the horrors they face, to give their bravery real meaning and force real mechanical consequences in the game. We kept that, too.

So what did we change? Let me change the subject. The greatest playwright ever is William Shakespeare. His greatest play is *King Lear*. Why would Akira Kurosawa make that play into a movie? And why would he set that movie, *Ran,* in samurai-era Japan instead of quasi-ancient Britain? Because more people want to – or can — see a movie than a play, and because transferring the story to Japan makes its themes paradoxically clearer than leaving them in the "familiar" world Shakespeare wrote. Did *Ran* improve on *King Lear*, or make it obsolete? Don't be ridiculous. Did it do something worth doing by changing *King Lear*? Absolutely.

To return to our topic, then: Another part of what makes *Call of Cthulhu* so great is its emphasis on investigation, on gathering clues instead of treasure. We designed GUMSHOE to make that easier, clearer, and more direct. GUMSHOE exists to solve a problem that many people found with running *Call of Cthulhu* – one bad die roll can derail an adventure. You didn't find the diary, so you didn't get the spell, so either Arkham is destroyed or the Keeper has to scuttle 'round and plant the diary somewhere else. In *Trail of Cthulhu*, the GUMSHOE rules guarantee that you will find that diary. (We don't promise not to destroy Arkham.) This is not the entirety of what GUMSHOE offers, but it was the starting point for GUMSHOE's laser-like focus on investigation.

Some Keepers, and even some players, enjoyed seeing everything go pear-shaped, and reveled in the creative destruction of the adventure. Some didn't, and worked out their own ways around the problem, ways they are perfectly happy with; their own crib sheets to *King Lear*, if you will. We hope there is enough other good stuff in here for them, but *Trail of Cthulhu* is first and foremost for the Keepers and players who privilege investigation, and who want mechanics that do likewise. It's for fans of procedural shows like *House* or *CSI*, in which the mystery isn't "will the lab test come back," but "what do the results mean"? That's not to say things won't go wrong for the players, merely that the wrongness won't be caused by an absence of

Core Concepts

Roleplaying Game: We assume you've already got this covered. If not, see any other roleplaying game book for the mandatory "What is Roleplaying" section, or ask your geek friends.
Keeper: The Game Master, or GM.
Investigators: The Player Characters, or PCs.
Investigative Abilities: Include academic, interpersonal, and technical abilities. These abilities *always* work; they are designed to gather clues.
General Abilities: The rest of the abilities, including combat abilities and "statistics" like Health, Sanity, and Stability. Using or testing them creates drama; they may fail.
Stability: A short-term measure of your Investigator's mental health. It goes down rapidly during an adventure, but usually refreshes afterward.
Sanity: A long-term measure of your Investigator's blissful ignorance of the horrible truths of the Mythos. It goes down slowly, and seldom if ever goes up again.
The Mythos: Short for Cthulhu Mythos, the body of lore created by HP Lovecraft that underlies most, or all, of the horrific events in a *Trail of Cthulhu* campaign or adventure.
HP Lovecraft: American horror writer (1890-1937). All quotes in this rulebook are from his stories and poetry.
Clue: The point of each scene is to deliver a clue to the mystery, to the Investigator with the relevant investigative ability. When the clue has been delivered, the scene can end, unless there's a really awesome fight going on. Clues are leads to other scenes; they don't have to be "true."

clues, but how they use them. It's for players who are curious about the Call, and who want to follow the Trail all the way to the end.

Purist or Pulp or Both?

The game *Trail of Cthulhu* is intended to tell stories of uncovering the occult horror mysteries of the Cthulhu Mythos. Traditionally, such games fall into one of two camps.

One is the Purist idiom or mode, which takes a subset of HP Lovecraft's later and starker works (*The Colour Out of Space*, *At the Mountains of Madness*, *The Shadow Out of Time*, *The Whisperer in Darkness*) as its model. It intends to recreate a game of philosophical horror, in which the act of uncovering the truth dooms both active seeker and unfortunate bystander alike.

The second is the Pulp idiom or mode, which aims rather for the "desperate action" feel of Robert E Howard's Cthulhu Mythos stories (*The Thing on the Roof*, *The Fire of Asshurbanipal*, *Skull-Face*). It intends to focus on the struggle (especially the physical struggle) against the Mythos, doomed or noble as the case may be. It also privileges character survival somewhat more than does the Purist idiom.

HP Lovecraft, of course, wrote in both idioms: *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, *The Dunwich Horror*, and *The Shunned House* all feature more-or-less resolute monster-hunting Investigators thwarting cosmic evil in Howardian fashion. (Robert E Howard also wrote at least one fine Purist Mythos tale, *The Black Stone*.) Many of Lovecraft's finest tales, such as *The Call of Cthulhu* (which features both neurasthenic scholars uncovering the truth and police raids on vile cults) and *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* (which features both a desperate chase through a ruined town and a narrative of psychological corruption) draw from both modes for their power. While it is not our job to tell you how to run your game (actually, it is, but we'll get to that in a later chapter), it seems to us that treating Cthulhoid horrors the way HP Lovecraft does would be a good idea.

However, for those who wish to emphasize one or another idiom, we have indicated those rules and game elements most suited for the Purist mode with the following symbol:

and those most suited for the Pulp mode with this one:

The Keeper may rule that some rules and elements are simply not allowed in her games in order to inculcate a specific flavor of horror, which is after all the entire point. An index of Pulp and Purist rules can be found on p 243.

GUM 03

The Investigator

"There can be nothing normal in the mind of one who, knowing what I knew of the horrors of Tempest Mountain, would seek alone for the fear that lurked there.... Yet I continued my quest with even greater zeal as events and revelations became more monstrous."

— The Lurking Fear

In *Trail of Cthulhu,* your player character is called an "Investigator" because that is what player characters do: investigate the (often horrible) occult mysteries that conceal the truth of the Cthulhu Mythos. Investigators may be professional investigators such as detectives, police, or government agents, or they may not. Regardless of an Investigator's chosen career, uncovering the secrets of the Mythos has become her life's work.

Occupations

Before discovering the Mythos, your Investigator did something else; something you may still do to keep body and soul together while he risks both. This is your **Occupation,** which helps determine the abilities you will use during your adventures.

The Occupations typical of Lovecraftian characters (Antiquarian, Artist, Author, Dilettante, Doctor, Journalist, Police Detective, and Professor) are marked with the Purist symbol . The other listed Occupations are both typical of the 1930s and rife with potential for eldritch encounters.

Every Occupation description includes its Occupational abilities (see p. 23), its Credit Rating band (see p. 32), and any special abilities or rules that Investigators with that Occupation can use. You can buy and build Occupational abilities at half-price, so pick an Occupation geared to what you want your Investigator to be able to do in the game.

Investigator Creation Quick Reference

Ask your Keeper how the campaign frame (see p. 204) affects character creation. This can, for example, set the number of build points available or give caps on certain abilities.

Choose your Investigator's original Occupation (see p. 9). Decide if you still follow it, or if you have abandoned your job to become a full-time (and likely increasingly impoverished and ostracized) uncoverer of Mythos truths. In a one-shot adventure, you may not have time to quit your job!

Based on your own conception of your Investigator's character and backstory, choose your Drive (see p. 19).

Spend build points (see p. 23) on your abilities (see p. 28), making sure your party as a whole has as many abilities as possible covered.

Define the Pillars of your Sanity (see p. 46); and Sources of your Stability, (p. 48), if your campaign uses them.

Choose any contacts you have (see p. 31)

At any point during this process, decide on your Investigator's name, birthplace, favorite cigarettes, religious beliefs, or anything else that you think will help you understand and roleplay your Investigator.

List of Occupations

Alienist
Antiquarian
Archaeologist
Artist
Author
Clergy
Criminal
Dilettante
Doctor
Hobo
Journalist
Military
Nurse
Parapsychologist
Pilot
Police Detective
Private Investigator
Professor
Scientist

Alienist

A specialist in mental illness, you may be a Vienna-trained psychoanalyst, a neurologist who studies brain function, or a medical doctor with a strong interest in behavioral science. Although Freudian theories are coming to dominate the field, they are far from universally understood or accepted.

Occupational Abilities: Biology, Languages (German and Latin), Library Use, Medicine, Pharmacy, Psychoanalysis, Assess Honesty, and any other two Interpersonal abilities.

Credit Rating: 3-4

Special: By using Medicine or an Interpersonal ability, you have access to mental records and sanitarium wards generally off limits to the public. If you are a licensed MD (a Medicine rating of 2 or more), you can do the same for medical records and hospital wards.

You make Psychoanalysis tests for Psychological Triage (see p. 79) at a Difficulty of 3, instead of 4. It costs you only 1 Psychoanalysis point instead of 2 to stabilize an erratic character. You can recover your own Stability, but you only recover 1 point for each Psychoanalysis point you spend.

You can use Assess Honesty as forensic psychology. From the details of a crime scene, you can, based on past case studies of similar offenses, assemble a profile detailing the perpetrator's likely personal history, age, habits and attitudes. You will probably need to remind the Keeper of this use of the ability.

You may put build points into, and use, the Hypnosis ability (see p. 43).

Antiquarian

As much a state of mind as a profession, you value the past and willingly immerse yourself in it. You may have a small independent income, you may be a resident scholar at a museum or gallery, or you may condescend to deal in antiques, books, or the objets d'art of a more gracious era.

Occupational Abilities: Architecture, Art History, Bargain, History, Languages, Law, Library Use, and any one Investigative ability as a personal specialty.

Credit Rating: 2-5

Special: Once per adventure, you may have an informative or suitable item for the current investigation "back at the shop." Antiquarian book dealers may have a relevant volume of lore (such as a memoir or the privately published ranting of a crackpot); dealers in silver may have ornamental daggers; importers may have a "queer tribal mask from the Congo." To remember and uncover such an item requires a use of the corresponding ability (e.g., Art History, Library Use).

This item may either contain a core clue for solving the mystery, or it may provide a weapon or technique for resolving it. In the first instance, you might be able to avoid sneaking into the creepy abandoned church in search of their blasphemous hymnal – you have a shellac pressing of the hymn in your used record-albums bin. In the second case, you needn't hunt down the Enchant Flute spell to drive off the lloigor – you have a set of Pan-pipes used in Orphic rites in decadent Cyrene. (Also in the second case, the effectiveness of the item may depend on the size of your spend.)

If you leave the city where your collection or shop is stored, you may not necessarily be able to use this ability (and certainly not in a convenient fashion), unless you have an assistant you can trust to find the item and mail it to you … and you're willing to wait a week for the mail to arrive while the cultists build their vortex of power.

The Keeper is well within her rights to deny your possession of powerful Mythos artifacts, effective spell books, and so forth, or to deny anything that seems abusive or just makes no narrative sense. She is also well within her rights to add other side effects to your item.

Archaeologist

You travel to strange, far places to uncover the past. You may be a meticulous scholar, working in libraries and devoting your career to a single dig, or you may be little better than a tomb robber, wielding a bullwhip and pistol to bring trophies back to your museum. You may depend on such treasures to fund your expeditions, or you may get grants from universities and foundations.

Occupational Abilities: Archaeology, Athletics, Evidence Collection, First Aid, History, Languages, Library Use, Riding, and any two other Investigative abilities.

Credit Rating: 4-5

Special: By using Archaeology or a suitable Interpersonal ability, you can get access to museum storage areas or be allowed to handle artifacts. (You will likely not get to carry them away with you legally, regardless.) If you have academic credentials (both an Archaeology rating of 2+ and a Credit Rating of 3+), you can get access to closed stacks at a university library.

Occupations and Gender

"Some of the experiments she proposed were very daring and radical ... but he had confidence in her powers and intentions."
— The Thing on the Doorstep

In 1930, about a quarter of American women held jobs outside the home. During the Depression, attempting to preserve what jobs there were for "bread winners," 26 of 48 states passed laws against the employment of married women. This had essentially no effect; in 1940, the proportion of working women had slightly increased. Of those women, most worked in clerical jobs, sales, or as domestic servants. Some worked in factories – mostly clothing, light industry, and piecework. Less than a tenth of a percent of American women had professional jobs (besides teaching and nursing) during the decade.

This means exactly nothing for players of Trail of Cthulhu. The default option (and the publisher's assumption) is that if you can suspend your disbelief sufficiently to imagine giant betentacled monstrosities, then a female doctor should be no problem. While a Purist game would indeed be comfortably all-male, the popular culture of the era celebrated exciting, adventurous women, both fictional (Doc Savage's hellcat sister Patricia, the Shadow's top operative Margo Lane, the Spider's fiancée and fellow gunslinger Nita Van Sloan) and factual (aviator Beryl Markham, evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson, outlaw Ma Barker). In movies, the 1930s was the golden age of the independent heroine, feisty or dangerous, from screwball comedy to noir. Women authors, then as now, ruled the best-seller lists, and the "gal reporter" was already a stereotype when Lois Lane embodied it in 1938. Female scholars had long since breached the ivory tower – Egyptologist turned anthropologist Margaret Murray may be the woman most often mentioned in Lovecraft's tales. America's first female private eye joined the Pinkertons before the Civil War, and by the 1930s, there were gun-toting "Policewomen" in the NYPD, mostly assigned to the vice squad.

Even in a realistic game, then, the only Occupation actually closed to female Investigators is the Military. Certainly, in a historically realistic game, a female Investigator will likely suffer from condescension, unwelcome advances, and misplaced chivalry, among other sexist nonsense. But like Miss Marple (or the historical NKVD agent Melita Norwood, who began spying for Stalin in 1937), she may find that being underestimated is quite an advantage in ferreting out secrets. And in a Pulp game, the sky is literally the limit. Ask Amelia Earhart.

Artist

Whether you are a painter, a musician, a sculptor, an architect, or even a performer, you follow your Muse where she leads. Sensitive and temperamental, by reputation if not in fact, you already inhabit a demimonde that

Creating an Occupation

It may come to pass that a player wants a different sort of Investigator than the generous selection already provided. The Keeper should first determine if the requested Occupation is better expressed as a specialized version of pre-existing Occupation: Author, Criminal, Dilettante, Professor, and Scientist especially leave a lot of elbow room for variation. If so, the Keeper and player should work together to tweak the ability lists of the existing Occupation to best suit the player's vision. Swapping out one or two Abilities is usually enough – swapping Athletics for Driving, for example, transforms the Pilot into a Sailor. (Access to a plane becomes access to a boat or ship.)

Entirely new Occupations should have between seven and nine Occupational Abilities; provide fewer for Occupations with wider latitude for choice or with better special abilities. (Needless to say, no Occupation should have Credit Rating, Cthulhu Mythos, Health, Sanity, or Stability as Occupational Abilities.) Interpolating a Credit Rating band should be relatively simple from the existing examples and the Credit Rating discussion on p. 32.

Special rules for Occupations generally fall into one of two categories: privileged access to parts of the setting and hence to clue-generating scenes (police files for Police Detectives, etc) or neat mechanical tweaks (like the post-hoc spends for Criminal and Private Investigator). The first is easier to create and to justify. The Keeper should try to avoid doing the second unless she's come up with something totally awesome that she is confident will not unbalance the Investigator party.

most never understand.

Occupational Abilities: Architecture, Art, Art History, Craft, Disguise, Flattery, Photography, Assess Honesty, and any two Academic or Interpersonal abilities as personal specialties.

Credit Rating: 1-4

Special: You may refresh one pool point in an ability representing your chosen art form (Art, Architecture, Craft, Photography, etc) during any significant downtime in an adventure, up to a maximum of four times per session. This represents time spent rehearsing, sketching, or what have you; Keepers should resist allowing this when the artist would not have the time or resources to polish their skill.

Author

You use words to capture existence, to conceal yourself, to reveal the truth, or to sell fantasy to Depression-stricken readers. Perhaps all of the above. Your labors are solitary and your rewards sporadic; you may have too much time to think. With discipline and a modicum of skill, though, even a pulp writer can still keep his head above water.

Occupational Abilities: Art, History, Languages, Library Use, Oral History, Assess Honesty, and three other abilities as personal specialties or left over from previous jobs.

Credit Rating: 1-3

Special: You may use any downtime in an adventure to refresh one Academic pool point, up to a maximum of four times per session. This represents time spent reading, checking notes and files, and so forth; Keepers should resist allowing this when the Investigator would not have the time or resources to do the necessary reading. That said, Trail of Cthulhu adventures will likely be rife with libraries that invite any author worth her salt to say "You guys check the rest of the house, I'm going to hit the books here for an hour or two."

Clergy

Itinerant revival preacher, trusted neighborhood priest, scholarly rabbi, or eager missionary, the varieties of clerical life present many of the same challenges to those who listen most intently for God's call. You may be predisposed to believe in the supernatural, but you are peculiarly vulnerable to the maltheistic revelations of the Mythos.

Occupational Abilities: History, Languages (Latin, Greek, Aramaic, or Hebrew), Library Use, Psychoanalysis, Assess Honesty, Reassurance, Theology, and one other Interpersonal ability.

Credit Rating: 2-5

Special: By using Theology or Reassurance you can gain access to church records not generally or easily available to the public. Mere clerical status does not guarantee you access to the "Z" Collection in the Vatican Library or similarly secret archives, of course, although a sufficiently

grandiose spend and a kindly Keeper might make such a thing possible.

If you identify yourself as a member of the clergy (or are wearing your traditional garb), once per game session you may freely refresh any Interpersonal ability pool by talking to one of your co-religionists (though not a fellow Investigator).

Psychoanalysis is not one of your Occupational abilities.

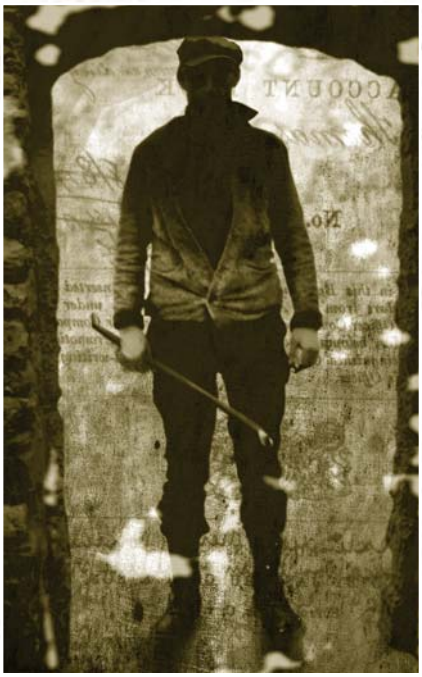
You make Psychoanalysis tests for Psychological Triage (see p. 79) at a Difficulty of 3, instead of 4.

A priest can bless holy water, save the souls of the dying with extreme unction, use crucifixes to fend off vampires, and even exorcise demons (though not the entities of the Mythos) in a contest of Stability against the demon's Health. Other clergy may have similar ritual powers. This benefit is dependent on the campaign frame (see p. 204).

Criminal

Those who live on the other side of the law are already aware of a secret world of degeneracy, desperation, and evil beneath the normal ways of civilization. Some criminals have built their own codes and laws to shield themselves from the realization that all human order is breakable by acts of will. Others revel in this discovery.

Occupational Abilities: Bargain, Intimidation, Locksmith, Scuffling, Sense Trouble, Shadowing, Stealth, Streetwise, and one other Interpersonal or Technical ability as a personal specialty.



Credit Rating: 0-4

Special: Criminals with point pools in Conceal, Filch, or Shadowing may spend points after rolling the die for a test. For every 2 points you spend after rolling the die, you increase the die result by 1. This only applies if you are undistracted and not directly observed. It never applies during a contest. You must describe the thing that almost went wrong, and how you caught it barely in time or succeeded through sheer luck.

Members of the Mafia may take one free rating point in Languages to know Italian. Members of similar criminal organizations may have similar ratings at the Keeper's discretion.

Dilettante

You are self-supporting, living off an inheritance, trust fund, or other source of independent income. Free from the pressures of forced employment, you may dedicate yourself to any pursuit you choose.

Occupational Abilities: Credit Rating, Flattery, Riding, and any five abilities you choose.

Credit Rating: 3+

Special: You may use your Credit Rating pool to call on personal connections in any field of endeavor. These contacts will generally be relatives, old schoolfellows, and similar people of your social class.

Doctor

You see your work as emblematic of the best in society: rational, humane, clean, and selfless. If only society could be cured or cut free of its diseases the way the body can be purged by treatment or surgery! The wealthier and more successful doctors can avoid the blood and filth that their noble aims are built upon.

Occupational Abilities: Accounting, Biology, First Aid, Forensics, Languages (Latin), Medicine, Pharmacy, Assess Honesty, Reassurance.

Credit Rating: 4-6

Special: By using Medicine or Reassurance, you have access to medical records and hospital wards generally off limits to the public. If you are affiliated with a hospital, sanitarium, or other facility, you can automatically use Reassurance to talk your way into any part of your institution from the drugs locker to the deep freeze.

When you use First Aid, each point spent heals 3 Health points, rather than 2. (You gain 2 Health

points rather than 1 for each First Aid point you spend to heal yourself.) You can stabilize the condition of a seriously wounded victim by spending only 1 First Aid point, rather than 2. (See p. 63)

Hobo

You are not merely one of the millions out of work in the Depression. You are one of a breed apart, a king of the road. You ride the rails to avoid society, looking for handouts and working only when necessary. You may be a thief on occasion, but you would no more become a professional thief than you would take any other job.

Occupational Abilities: Athletics, Bargain, Filch, Outdoorsman, Sense Trouble, Stealth, Streetwise.

Credit Rating: 0. Unless the Keeper allows you to permanently change your Occupation (if you get married, or drafted, for example), you may never put any points into Credit Rating.

Special: In addition to their normal functions, you can use Sense Trouble or Streetwise to read hobo signs and find out the lay of the land in a strange town. You can use Streetwise to activate fellow hobo contacts. Other contacts available to you might include Communists (such as itinerant IWW labor organizers), friendly railroad guards, charity workers, or a local lady known to be a soft touch.

Amateur Journalism

Before the Internet, obsessed technical hobbyists still figured out ways to tell each other their opinions on things. In the 1930s, they called themselves "amateur journalists," publishing poetry, fiction, commentary, politics, and research themselves using hectographs, spirit duplicators ("Ditto machines," to those of us who attended grade school in the 1960s), or even printing presses. (Some amateur journalists owned their own press; most simply hired a local printer or a fellow amateur.) Generally a single editor collated all contributors' submissions (including those received from "Mailing Bureaux" created to supply copy) into a single issue, mailing it out to subscribers. In some APAs (Amateur Press Associations), only contributors could subscribe, but some (like their heirs the zines) were also sold to outsiders.

An amateur journalist in the 1930s would be most likely to publish creative writing or politics, but in the world of Trail of Cthulhu, there's nothing that says an APA editor wouldn't focus on Fortean phenomena, folk-lore, ghosts, and psychic research. (A really good issue might even count as a Mythos tome!) She might even count HP Lovecraft (President, United Amateur Press Association, 1917-1918; President, National Amateur Press Association, 1923) among her readers!

An amateur journalist might have any other sort of career or Occupation, although Author and Dilettante would be the two most common. With the Keeper's permission, an amateur journalist might be able to take Craft (Printing) as an Occupational ability instead of one of those listed.

Journalist

Whether for newspapers, magazines, or radio, you piece together the patterns of life and build them into a story, revealing the truth about the world around you. You may try to keep yourself separated from the story, especially if it is one of corruption and selfishness, but how can you avoid your own words?

Occupational Abilities: Cop Talk, Disguise, Evidence Collection, Languages (for foreign correspondents), Oral History, Photography, Assess Honesty, Reassurance, Shadowing, and one other Interpersonal ability.

Credit Rating: 2-4

Special: By using Reassurance, you have access to newspaper morgues. At your own paper, you do the same to get the records clerks to fetch relevant articles. Similarly, fellow journalists may confide "off the record" rumors and stories to you, unless you're a direct competitor.

Military

You place yourself between others and danger, for a paycheck, for your flag, for your mates, or because you have no other good options. Your life is rote and routine, boredom and bureaucracy, dust and drill. And sometimes, of course, madness, death, blood, and nightmares.

Occupational Abilities: Athletics, Firearms, Intimidation, Outdoorsman, Scuffling, Weapons.

Army/Marines: add Conceal, Driving, Stealth.

Corpsman/Medic: add First Aid, Medicine, Reassurance.

Engineers/Heavy Weapons: add Driving, Explosives, Mechanical Repair.

Navy: add Astronomy, Mechanical Repair, Piloting.

Officer (any branch): add Bureaucracy, Riding or Piloting, Reassurance.

Credit Rating: 2–5 (officers); 2–4 (enlisted)

Special: You can spend 2 points from your Reassurance pool to steady panicking or erratic characters (see p. 79) as long as your own Stability is above 0.

If you are still serving, you can use any Interpersonal ability to gain entry to a military facility of your nation, except for explicitly top-secret bases. Unnoticed entry may require other plans.

If you are a combat veteran, the Difficulty Numbers (including opponents' Hit Thresholds) of your combat abilities (Athletics, Firearms, Scuffling, Weapons) do not increase by 1 until either your Stability or your Health drops below –5. If you are a combat veteran, your Stability is capped at 10, but some threats to your Stability may be made at a lower Difficulty number (see Experience and Stability on p. 72)

Nurse

A nurse is a trained medical assistant, sometimes male, more often female. Nurses are usually less comprehensively trained, always less well paid, and often less distant and callous than medical doctors.

Professional Parapsychology

In the 1930s, as in the modern era, most parapsychologists are sensation-mongering journalists, eccentrics plain and simple, or at best scholars with formal credentials in another field. (JB Rhine, studying ESP as Director of the Parapsychological Laboratory at Duke University during this decade, was trained as a botanist.) The Occupation of parapsychologist represents more of an avocation than a vocation, in other words.

In a Pulp-idiom game, "occult detectives" and academic parapsychologists may be more common and more accepted, but even in the historical 1930s, there are a few formal bodies dedicated to parapsychological studies, such as:

Society for Psychical Research: Founded in 1882 by Cambridge scholars with headquarters in London and archives in Cambridge, the SPR publishes an academically reviewed quarterly Journal and includes both academics and interested amateurs. The French branch, founded in 1885, is the Société Francaise pour Recherche Psychique.

The Ghost Club: A less-formal version of the SPR, which accepts proponents of mechanistic, magical, and Spiritualist theories of ghosts. Founded in 1862, it spends much of the 1930s in decline until the bombastic ghost-hunter Harry Price takes it over and re-founds it in 1938. Its headquarters are in London.

London Spiritualist Alliance: A major institution in mediumistic studies founded in 1884. It publishes a magazine, Light, edited (oddly enough) by the pioneering psychoanalytical theorist of ghost phenomena, Nandor Fodor.

American Society for Psychical Research: Increasingly dominated by Spiritualists and amateurs after a schism over the "Margery" medium case in 1925, the Boston-centered ASPR is flourishing – with branches opening in New York, Cleveland, and San Francisco – but at the cost of its academic respectability. Its monthly Journal is increasingly sensationalist.

Boston Society for Psychical Research: This self-consciously scientific and respectable group split off from the ASPR in 1925 over the "Margery" case. Its 200 members are active all over the country, but centered in New England.

American Psychical Institute & Laboratory: Besides Rhine's lab at Duke, the only parapsychological laboratory in America. Founded by the English author and researcher Dr Hereward Carrington in 1921, closed in 1923, reopened a decade later in New York City.

International Spiritualist Federation: A British umbrella group for the Spiritualist movement. It publishes the Psychic News.

Institut Métapsychique International: The IMI was founded in Paris in 1918 by a wealthy French Spiritualist, but maintains a staff of rigorously objective researchers. Membership is only by appointment.

Institute for Brain Research: An institute at Leningrad University lead by Leonid Vasiliev. His work on ESP has been classified on Stalin's orders since 1927, although he remains a member of the IMI.

Occupational Abilities: Biology, First Aid, Medicine, Pharmacy, Assess Honesty, Reassurance. At the Keeper's discretion, a nurse who has to deal with hospital paperwork might have Bureaucracy; one who has to deal with arrogant doctors might have Flattery.

Credit Rating: 2-4

Special: By using Medicine or Reassurance, you have access to medical records and hospital wards generally off limits to the public. If you are affiliated with a hospital, sanitarium, or other facility, you can automatically use Reassurance to talk your way into any part of your institution from the drugs locker to the deep freeze.

When you use First Aid, each point spent heals 3 Health points, rather than 2. (You gain 2 Health points rather than 1 for each First Aid point you spend to heal yourself.) You can stabilize the condition of a seriously wounded victim by spending only 1 First Aid point, rather than 2.
(See p. 63)

Parapsychologist

Academics hold you in dubious regard, while true believers doubt your sincerity. You straddle – perhaps uncomfortably – the line between reason and superstition, between faith and proof. You believe that the supernatural is merely the natural we have not yet studied, or perhaps that the methods of science can uncover or confirm the truths of theology.

Occupational Abilities: Anthropology, Electrical Repair, Library Use, Mechanical Repair, Occult, Photography, Assess Honesty, Sense Trouble.

Credit Rating: 2-3

Special: Like the Alienist, you may put build points into, and use, the Hypnosis ability (see p. 43). In an extremely pulpy game, you may have actual psychic powers, or work closely with those who have them. (Such "sensitives" may be fellow Investigators, or — as in Lovecraft's stories — expendable NPCs.) For rules and descriptions of some psychic abilities in the GUMSHOE system, see Fear Itself.

Pilot

You live to fly, and you fly to live. You might be a Great War veteran seeking leftover thrills on the barnstorm circuit, or a private courier hoping to strike it rich and found your own air service. You might fly cutting-edge birds for a rich man, or build your own ship out of whatever you can scrounge. Whatever your route to the sky, it's the only place you want to be.

Occupational Abilities: Astronomy, Driving, Electrical Repair, Mechanical Repair, Piloting, Sense Trouble.

Credit Rating: 2-3

Special: You own or have regular access to an airplane. Its size and quality depend on your Credit Rating pool.

Police Detective

You live by the code of the cop, whether it's the one they put on the wall at the academy, or the one you picked up on foot patrol in the bad neighborhoods. You draw lines between cops, perps, and civilians, and it's best when nothing crosses them. When the law and justice disagree, that's when you decide where the line runs.

Occupational Abilities: Athletics, Cop Talk, Driving, Evidence Collection, Firearms, Interrogation, Law, Assess Honesty, Sense Trouble.

Credit Rating: 3-4

Special: With judicious use of Cop Talk, you can not only put the police at ease, but gain access to case files, evidence rooms, and prisoners, among other things not accessible by normal civilians. If you're far outside your jurisdiction, you may need Cop Talk and a really good plan.

Within your own jurisdiction, any points at all in Cop Talk will get you access to, and use of, police laboratories (for forensics and ballistics tests, or for more abstruse purposes) and even the morgue.

Private Investigator

There are things that cops can't do, and things that cops won't do, and you'll take money to do either. Sometimes you get dragged into something the cops want you out of, but you gotta stay in it to keep the cops honest. What keeps you honest? Now, that's the real mystery, ain't it?

Occupational Abilities: Accounting, Disguise, Driving, Law, Locksmith, Photography, Assess Honesty, Reassurance, Scuffling, Shadowing.

Credit Rating: 2-3

Special: Private eyes with point pools in Disguise or Shadowing may spend points after rolling the die for a test. For every 2 points you spend after rolling the die, you increase the die result by l. This only applies if you are undistracted and not directly observed. It never applies during a contest. You must describe the thing that almost went wrong, and how you caught it barely in

time or succeeded through sheer luck.

The Occupational Abilities above accurately model typical 1930s private investigators, whose most common jobs were following and photographing adulterers, and following and finding missing cash. For a Pulpy, hard-boiled PI in the Chandler-Hammett vein, use the following Occupational Abilities list: Cop Talk, Driving, Intimidation, Locksmith, Assess Honesty, Scuffling, Shadowing, Streetwise.

Professor

You might be a calm solon, dispensing the wisdom of the ages between puffs on your pipe. You might be a hapless child in an adult's body, incompetent in anything except Middle High German, and vainglorious and petty about that. You might be the second, and think you're the first, to the great delight of all who behold you.

Occupational Abilities: Bureaucracy, Languages, Library Use, any one Interpersonal ability, and any three Academic abilities (including, for these purposes, Astronomy and Chemistry).

Credit Rating: 3-5

Special: As long as your academic credentials are intact (a Credit Rating of 3+), using Bureaucracy lets you enjoy nearly unrestricted access to closed library stacks, research laboratories, and even many private and government archives.

If you have a Credit Rating of 5 or better, you have tenure and cannot be removed from your professorship without clear, public evidence of moral turpitude on your part.

Scientist

You seek to advance science, perhaps to improve the world, or perhaps to tease out some long-denied truth. You may consider yourself handy around the lab; that third fire could have happened to anyone. You just need more equipment, more time, more samples, more understanding colleagues. Perhaps the fools laughed at you at the University. Well, you'll show them.

Occupational Abilities: Electrical Repair, Evidence Collection, Languages, Library Use, Photography, and any two of the following: Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Cryptography, Forensics, Geology, or Physics.

Credit Rating: 3-5

Martin Harvesson, Sample Investigator

Josh is building his first Trail of Cthulhu Investigator. While talking with the Keeper, he and the other players decide on a traditional, old-school sort of game, full of globe-trotting adventures and two-gun menaces, with plenty of lingering death in the dark places of the city. To tell the truth, Josh is a bigger fan of Humphrey Bogart than he is of HP Lovecraft, so he decides to build a tough-as-nails private eye. Josh names his character Martin Harvesson.

Special: You have access to a laboratory suitable for your researches, and can use Credit Rating to get tests and experiments performed in other laboratories by your peers or colleagues, or to get specialized equipment or machinery built. If you have academic credentials (Credit Rating of 3 or better and a rating of 2 or more in Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, or Physics), you can get access to closed stacks at a university library.

Drives

"Our motivation after that is something I will leave to psychologists. We knew now that some terrible extension of the camp horrors must have crawled into this nighted burial place of the aeons, hence could not doubt any longer the existence of nameless conditions — present or at least recent just ahead. Yet in the end we did let sheer burning curiosity — or anxiety — or autohypnotism — or vague thoughts of responsibility toward Gedney — or what not — drive us on."

— At the Mountains of Madness

What motivates an Investigator? Why uncover blasted ruins, or delve into matters quite obviously best left alone? Because some people – perhaps not the fortunate, or even the brave – are Driven to do so. Every Investigator must have a **Drive,** a core desire that impels him to seek strange, far truths at the cost of everything he once held dear. It is quite literally something more important to you than your life or sanity. Although psychologically an Investigator may be driven by many different forces, and the player can roleplay her with such complexity, mechanically each character should only have one core Drive.

Refusing to follow an Investigator's Drive, therefore, costs Stability. Succumbing to your Drive can temporarily blind you to the dangers of doing so, adding a thin veneer of Stability as with open but unseeing eyes you descend into the crypt (see p. 72) . If your sanity is imperiled too much you lose even this dubious benefit (see p. 76).

Any Drive might impel any sort of Investigator, but some Occupations seem more naturally suited to some Drives than others. Such pairings are noted below. Some Drives, likewise, are better suited to the Pulp or Purist games, although any Drive might motivate any character in any idiom.

List of Drives

- Adventure
- Antiquarianism
- Arrogance
- Artistic Sensitivity
- Bad Luck
- Curiosity
- Duty
- Ennui
- Follower
- In the Blood
- Revenge
- Scholarship
- Sudden Shock
- Thirst for Knowledge

Adventure

"In all this planning there was much that excited my interest. The fight itself promised to be unique and spectacular, while the thought of the scene on that hoary pile overlooking the antediluvian plateau of Gizeh ... appealed to every fibre of imagination in me."

— Under the Pyramids

Nothing gets you going like the promise of action, combat, and strange new experiences. You're an adrenaline junkie and if ichor is the cure, then so be it! Turning down an adventure to "play it safe" is like admitting that your whole life was meaningless before.

Especially appropriate for: Criminal, Military, Parapsychologist, Pilot

Example: Harry Houdini in *Under the Pyramids.*

Antiquarianism

"With the years his devotion to ancient things increased; so that history, genealogy, and the study of colonial architecture, furniture, and craftsmanship at length crowded everything else from his sphere of interests. These tastes are important to remember in considering his madness..."

— The Case of Charles Dexter Ward

The dead past is the only place you feel truly alive. Discovering some truth about it, or simply experiencing old and beautiful houses or items, is the purpose for living at all. Neglecting the past merely because it seems unsavory is for brutish, mayfly moderns.

Especially appropriate for: Antiquarian, Archaeologist, Clergy, Professor

Examples: Charles Dexter Ward, Elihu Whipple in *The Shunned House*, and the narrator of *He*.

Arrogance

"I tell you, I have struck depths that your little brain can't picture! I have seen beyond the bounds of infinity and drawn down daemons from the stars..."

— From Beyond

Your ultimate success will be its own justification, and it is sure to come to you, since only you have the will to grasp it. The rules of petty people don't apply to you, and neither do their shrinking, timorous fears.

Especially appropriate for: Alienist, Scientist

Examples: Herbert West, Crawford Tillinghast in *From Beyond,* Denys Barry in *The Moon-Bog*

Artistic Sensitivity

"For after all, the victim was a writer and painter wholly devoted to the field of myth, dream, terror, and superstition, and avid in his quest for scenes and effects of a bizarre, spectral sort."

— The Haunter of the Dark

You are already aware of the numinous and supernatural quality of the world – it is what you seek to capture in your art, of course. You must follow your Muse wherever she leads, clay in her hands for molding. Nothing, especially not mundane concerns, can stanch your need for inspiration.

Especially appropriate for: Artist, Author, Dilettante

Examples: Robert Blake in *The Haunter of the Dark*, Richard Pickman in *Pickman's Model*, the sculptor Henry Wilcox in *The Call of Cthulhu*, and possibly Erich Zann. Walter Gilman in *The Dreams in the Witch House* also essentially fits this pattern, treating higher mathematics as an art.

Bad Luck

It was generally stated that the affliction and shock were results of an unlucky slip whereby Birch had locked himself for nine hours in the receiving tomb of Peck Valley Cemetery...

— In The Vault

These things just seem to happen to you, although your luck might sour after you dig up a statuette, sleep in the wrong boarding house, or decide to rob a terrible old man. Bad Luck is essentially the same as being Cursed. (See p. 75 for how Bad Luck or Cursed works with the Drive rules.)

Especially appropriate for: Criminal, Hobo

Examples: The sailor Gustaf Johansen in *The Call of Cthulhu,* the narrators of *Cool Air, Dagon, The Music of Erich Zann,* and *The Picture in the House.*

In a less starkly cosmic game, bad luck can be earned: in *The Temple*, Captain von Altberg-Ehrenstein brings doom upon himself and his men by torpedoing the freighter *Victory.*

Curiosity

"Any reference to a town not shewn on common maps or listed in recent guide-books would have interested me, and the agent's odd manner of allusion roused something like real curiosity."

— The Shadow Over Innsmouth

When confronted by a mystery, you can't help but investigate. Damn the risks, there's something going on here and you're going to figure it out! If you don't, it will just drive you crazy worrying about it.

Especially appropriate for: Journalist, Parapsychologist, Police Detective, Private Investigator, Scientist

Examples: Randolph Carter in *Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath,* and the narrators of *Beyond the Wall of Sleep*, *The Lurking Fear*, *The Colour Out of Space*, and *The Shadow Over Innsmouth.*

Duty

"Duty came first; and although there must have been nearly a hundred mongrel celebrants in the throng, the police relied on their firearms and plunged determinedly into the nauseous rout."

— The Call of Cthulhu

You know it's dangerous and ill-advised, but somebody's got to go down those steps or bust up that cult. And you're elected, because if you don't take care of things now, they're just going to get worse. If you don't, who is? Some time-serving goldbrick just counting down the days until their pension? Don't be ridiculous.

Especially appropriate for: Clergy, Doctor, Military, Police Detective

Examples: Inspector Legrasse in *The Call of Cthulhu* and Detective Malone in *The Horror at Red Hook,* the sailors and G-men who expunge *The Shadow Over Innsmouth,* the colonial-era posse that burns out Curwen in *Charles Dexter Ward*, Professor Armitage in *The Dunwich Horror.*

Ennui

"...finally there remained for us only the more direct stimuli of unnatural personal experiences and adventures."

— The Hound

Perhaps you had one experience that you'll never get again, or perhaps you've just read about such things in decadent yellow-backed novels. You've tried everything else, and nothing else matters. So what if it might kill you? At least that would be different.

Especially appropriate for: Artist, Dilettante, Military

Examples: St John and the narrator in The Hound, Randolph Carter in *The Silver Key*, Thomas Olney in *The Strange High House in the Mist*, and to an extent Jervas Dudley in *The Tomb.*

Follower

"...they were terrible studies, which I pursued more through reluctant fascination than through actual inclination. Warren dominated me, and sometimes I feared him."

— The Statement of Randolph Carter

This wasn't actually your idea, and you'd like that put in the report somewhere. But someone else – someone who's important to you for whatever reason — went down into that tunnel, and you'd better go after them to make sure they're safe. Or to make sure they don't pick someone else to hold the field telephone next time.

In an ongoing *Trail of Cthulhu* campaign, you should pick a fellow Investigator (ideally a foolhardy one) to be the person you follow. When – er, if – they die, you may switch to a different "leader," or switch Drives to Revenge.

Especially appropriate for: Doctor, Military, Police Detective

Examples: Randolph Carter in *The Statement of Randolph Carter*, Herbert West's assistant, and the narrators of *Pickman's Model* and *Hypnos*. Followers can also be friends or family members such as the narrator of *From Beyond*, Dr Willett in *Charles Dexter Ward*, Daniel Upton in *The Thing on the Doorstep*, Norrys in *The Rats in the Walls*, or Ammi Pierce in *The Colour Out of Space*.

In the Blood

"I thought the room and the books and the people very morbid and disquieting, but because an old tradition of my fathers had summoned me to strange feastings, I resolved to expect queer things."

— The Festival

Quite frankly, you're not sure why you keep coming back to the moldering graveyard, or poring over those antique texts. But queer behavior runs in the family, apparently. Outsiders wouldn't understand.

Especially appropriate for: Antiquarian, Dilettante

Examples: Charles Dexter Ward, Arthur Jermyn, Delapore in *The Rats in the Walls*, and the narrator of *The Festival*. Thurston, the narrator of *The Call of Cthulhu,* inherits his uncle's research. Olmstead, the narrator of *The Shadow Over Innsmouth,* turns out to be motivated by his ancestry, though he doesn't know it. Such a secret — perhaps shameful — Drive is perfectly suitable for *Trail of Cthulhu* Investigators. A player can even request such a secret Drive without telling the Keeper which one he's requesting, and without discovering what his Investigator's Drive is until it emerges in play (see p. 75).

Revenge

"Ezra Weeden, though his periods of espionage were necessarily brief ... had a vindictive persistence which the bulk of the practical townsfolk and farmers lacked..."

— The Case of Charles Dexter Ward

Something out there hurt you, or hurt someone you care about. Therefore, it must be destroyed, burned out, taken down, exposed … whatever it takes, and whatever it costs. Any trail that might lead to your vengeance is a trail you have to follow to the bitter end.

Especially appropriate for: Criminal, Private Investigator

Examples: Ezra Weeden in *Charles Dexter Ward*, and the narrator of *The Lurking Fear* after the death of his friend Munroe. Followers like Dr Willett (in *Charles Dexter Ward*) may change their Drive to Revenge if their associates are killed, sucked through a portal, or otherwise removed from play.

Scholarship

"I felt sure that I was on the track of a very real, very secret, and very ancient religion whose discovery would make me an anthropologist of note."

— The Call of Cthulhu

Uncovering the truth about the world is what true scholars do. It's certainly why you spend all that time in those libraries; why you track down sole survivors of isolated backwoods cults; why you learn languages not meant for human throats. Whether you're seeking tenure, the acclaim of your fellows, or just the satisfaction of expanding human knowledge, you Investigate in order to find the underlying pattern of things.

Especially appropriate for: Archaeologist, Professor, Scientist

Examples: Professor Angell and his nephew Francis Thurston in *The Call of Cthulhu,* Professor Dyer and his party in *At the Mountains of Madness.*

Sudden Shock

"Had he, then, witnessed some appalling ancient rite, or stumbled upon some frightful and revealing symbol in the priory or its vicinity?"

— The Rats in the Walls

Something has ripped the scrim off the world, and you can't go back to believing in Baby Jesus and FDR anymore. Whether it's your long-dead great-grandfather holding cannibal feasts in your basement, the things you saw on the Innsmouth Raid, or just a chance encounter with the Outside, you might as well go further in, because you aren't going back any time soon.

The player should come up with the specifics of the Sudden Shock, unless she'd like her Investigator to have amnesia (hysterical, traumatic, or Yithian-induced) on the subject. This latter option allows all manner of cruelty on the part of the Keeper, and is

Martin Harvesson, Sample Investigator

Josh likes Raymond Chandler's line about "down these mean streets a man must go, who is neither tarnished nor afraid," but he suspects that Duty won't suit his play style. So instead, he goes with "When a man's partner is killed, he's got to do something about it," and selects Revenge as Martin's Drive. Martin's partner got into something down on the docks and died. Martin won't let it rest there.

highly recommended.

Especially appropriate for: Parapsychologist, but any, really

Examples: Walter de la Poer in *The Rats in the Walls,* Professor Nathaniel Peaslee in *The Shadow Out of Time.*

Thirst for Knowledge

"I don't wish to put you in any peril, and suppose I ought to warn you that possession of the stone and record won't be very safe; but I think you will find any risks worth running for the sake of knowledge."

— "The Whisperer in Darkness"

You must – you must! — learn the secret lore of the cosmos. This is not footling, footnoted scholarship. It is the quest for truth. You don't want to advance human knowledge – the herd don't desire, or deserve, to know what lies behind the walls of the world. Only you (and perhaps a few fellow initiates) truly burn to possess such secrets, and only you are willing to do what it takes to get them.

Especially appropriate for: Archaeologist, Parapsychologist, Professor

Examples: Both Henry Akeley and Albert Wilmarth in *The Whisperer in Darkness,* Harley Warren in *The Statement of Randolph Carter,* the narrators of *The Nameless City* and *The Lurking Fear.*

Buying Abilities

With Occupation and Drive established, it's time to buy abilities for your Investigator. Investigators begin with a variable number of points to buy Investigative abilities, depending on group size, and 65 points to purchase General abilities. Investigative abilities include all Academic, Interpersonal, and Technical abilities. General abilities include all remaining abilities, including Health, Sanity, and Stability.

Occupational Abilities

You get two rating points in Occupational abilities for everyone on build point you spend. For example, 12 rating points of Occupational abilities cost you 6 build points. Left over half-points are lost, so assign an even number points to Occupational abilities. You cannot select Fleeing, Credit Rating, Cthulhu Mythos, Health, Sanity, or Stability as Occupational Abilities.

The number of points each player spends on Investigative abilities varies according to the number of regularly attending players, according to the following table.

# of players	Investigative Build Points
2	24
3	18
4+	16

Ability List By Families

Investigative Abilities

Investigative abilities comprise Academic, Interpersonal, and Technical abilities.

Academic

- Accounting
- Anthropology
- Archaeology
- Architecture
- Art History
- Biology
- Cthulhu Mythos
- Cryptography
- Geology
- History
- Languages
- Law
- Library Use
- Medicine
- Occult
- Physics
- Theology

Interpersonal

- Assess Honesty
- Bargain
- Bureaucracy
- Cop Talk
- Credit Rating
- Flattery
- Interrogation
- Intimidation
- Oral History
- Reassurance
- Streetwise

Technical

- Art
- Astronomy
- Chemistry
- Craft
- Evidence Collection
- Forensics
- Locksmith
- Outdoorsman
- Pharmacy
- Photography

General Abilities

- Athletics
- Conceal
- *Disguise
- Driving
- *Electrical Repair
- *Explosives
- Filch
- Firearms
- First Aid
- Fleeing
- Health
- Hypnosis
- *Mechanical Repair
- Piloting
- Preparedness
- Psychoanalysis
- Riding
- Sanity
- Scuffling
- Sense Trouble
- Shadowing
- Stability
- Stealth
- Weapons

*Some General abilities can be used as Investigative abilities in some circumstances. They are always bought and built as General abilities.

Players who can only attend every now and then get the same number of investigative build points as everyone else, but are not counted toward the total when deciding how many points to allocate. Your Keeper may give you a small pool of unallocated to compensate for spotty attendance (see p. 203).

Every ability has a numerical rating. Some rating points in some abilities are free: Each Investigator starts with a free rating of 4 points in Sanity, and 1 point in each of Stability and Health. Each Investigator also starts off with the lower edge of his Credit Rating band for free. You may trade your free Credit Rating points in for other Investigative build points on a 1-to-1 basis if your character concept calls for an especially unsuccessful (or shunned) Investigator.

An Investigator with the occupation Scientist normally starts out with a Credit Rating of 3, indicating a certain minimal academic respectability, and perhaps a steady laboratory job. But a "mad scientist" who lives in a slum basement

Variant Builds

Believe it or not, some playtesters argued that their characters were still too powerful and good at everything. We admire such dedication to the Lovecraftian spirit of the parochial, incompetent narrator.

For such players, reduce General build points from 65 to 60 and assign Investigative build points based on the following table, which generates outclassed, likely doomed – but forcibly specialized! – Investigators.

# of players	Investigative Build Points
2	16
3	12
4+	10

To generate Pulpier characters, increase the General points available from 65 to 75, but use the standard Investigative Build Points from the main text table. Pulp Investigator teams will very likely profit by using the Trading Points optional rule from the sidebar on p. 25.

Some campaign frames may have particular restrictions or caps on abilities, for example, a game set in an orphanage may have a very restricted number of Investigative and General abilities available. Others may force specialization by limiting the number of Academic or Technical abilities you may take.

somewhere, or a scientist disgraced for claiming that ultraviolet light contained monsters, might begin with a Credit Rating of 2 or even 1, depending on how cut off he is from his professional colleagues.

Usually, each rating point costs one build point, except for Occupational abilities, Fleeing, and Credit Rating.

Running away is easier than doing anything else strenuous; it's what humans are evolved for, after all. It's also very genre appropriate, so we reward it thusly: If your Fleeing rating is more than twice your final Athletics rating, you can buy rating points in Fleeing at a reduced rate, getting 2 rating points for each build point spent. (If you suspect you want to utilize this rule, decide on your final Athletics rating first. This makes things much easier.) Hence, if your Athletics rating is 0, all your Fleeing is half-price.

Building an Investigator Party

It's a good idea, both for mechanical and narrative reasons, to make sure your Investigator party covers as many ability bases as possible. Ideally, one Investigator will have any needed skill, and everyone has something cool that they do better than the rest of the group. When creating Investigators, go down the ability list and make sure you've got a good spread of talents, and that every Investigator has a potential starring role at some point in the story.

Trading Points

One *optional rule* to knit together such a party allows players to swap points among themselves. If using this rule, a player may trade 1 Investigative *build point* (not rating point) for 3 General *build points* (not rating points) from another player. (Or, obviously, vice-versa.) Thus, the consumptive academic can give 6 General ability points to the brutal Outfit enforcer (for Weapons and Explosives, say), and get 2 Investigative ability points from that worthy's pool (for, oh, Astronomy). Both players get to increase their Investigators' "spotlight" abilities and the party becomes more stereotypical. Which is to say, narratively better.

Zachary decides that his dilettante Willoughby Boothroyd stays in decent shape thanks to the polo matches and racquetball, but is really not much of an athlete. He puts only 2 points into Willoughby's Athletics ability. Zachary also really wants Boothroyd to be able to live to drink another day, so he decides to get Fleeing at 8. The first 4 rating points in Fleeing (up to twice Willoughby's final Athletics 2) cost Zachary the standard 4 build points, but the second 4 rating points cost only 2 build points.

Rating points in Credit Rating cost 1 build point each up to the top of the band listed under the Occupation, after which they cost 2 build points each, except for Dilettantes, who have no top limit on their Credit Rating band.

Shari is building a Professor, Dr Lunedi. She could buy Credit Rating 5 for 2 build points – her free 3 plus 2 more – but buying one more rating point for a Credit Rating 6 would cost 2 more build points, for a total of 4.

Credit Rating does *not* count as "any ability" in Occupational templates; it is *only* an Occupational ability for Dilettantes. The Keeper is fully within her rights to cap Credit Rating at the top of the band if she would prefer not to run adventures full of millionaire cops and private eyes.

Usually, you may not start the game with Cthulhu Mythos points (see p. 34)

Ability Caps

In the Purist mode, Health and Stability are capped at 12. They cannot be bought at higher levels, nor can additional experience points raise them above those levels. Your Sanity is capped at 10, and can never be higher than 10 minus your Cthulhu Mythos rating.

Pulp Investigators can be as buff and bold as they like, but we recommend staying as close as you can to the 12-point Health and Stability caps anyway if you want to keep confrontations tense.

Some campaign frames may cap other abilities, for example, a campaign set in a school might cap Academic, Technical and some General abilities, or even make them unavailable altogether.

How Many Points Should I Buy?

When choosing Investigative abilities, it is better to get a large number of abilities with fairly low ratings. Even a 1-point rating is worth having. You'll rarely want to spend more than 3 or 4 points on any one Investigative ability.

General abilities use different rules than investigative ones, which allow for possible failure. When choosing general abilities, you'll want to concentrate your points among a few abilities, giving your comparatively higher ratings than you want in the investigative category. You'll find that you'll want ratings at least 8 in core abilities, like Health and Stability, and depending on your Investigator concept, even higher ratings in Athletics, Firearms, Fleeing, Scuffling, or Weapons.

A special restriction applies to General abilities: your second highest rating must be at least half that of your highest rating. This is less onerous with an Occupation that includes any General abilities as Occupational Abilities (rating points in which cost half the build-point price), but it can still trip you up if you're not careful.

Craig wants his Investigator to have a Scuffling rating of 30. This requires him to take at least one other ability at 15. This would leave him only 20 points to spend on all of his other General abilities. (Or 27, if he bought an Occupational ability up to 16 with 8 build points.) Craig reconsiders, opting for a lower Scuffling, so he can spend his other points more freely.

If you want, you can save build points from character creation to spend later. If your Keeper is running an ongoing *Trail of Cthulhu* campaign, you may accumulate additional build points during play.

Ratings and Skill

The rules don't care whether your high Athletics rating comes from years of semi-pro baseball or just natural grace and speed. Similarly, whether you're an intuitive genius or a plodding, meticulous scholar is irrelevant in gauging your Archaeology ability. You can decide such things while personalizing your Investigator. What matters is what you can accomplish; how you accomplished it is up to you.

Even a single rating point in an investigative ability indicates a high degree of professional accomplishment or impressive natural talent. If you have an ability relevant to the task at hand, you automatically succeed in discovering any information or overcoming any obstacles necessary to propel you from the current scene further into the story.

Each rating point goes into a pool of points to spend in situations related to its base ability. You may ask to **spend** points to gain special benefits. Sometimes the Keeper will offer you the chance to spend points. In other circumstances she may accept your suggestions of ways to gain special benefits. Use them wisely; spent points do not return until the next scenario begins.

General abilities use a different set of rules and are measured on a different scale than investigative abilities. The two ability sets are handled in different way because they fulfill distinct narrative functions. The goal of any *Trail of Cthulhu* scenario is to uncover a mystery and confront the Mythos entity (or entities) behind it. The confrontation must be suspenseful, which is why general abilities have a possibility of failure. But the confrontation must also occur for the story to satisfy, which is why investigating the mystery – in order to get to the confrontation — must succeed. A well-designed *Trail of Cthulhu* scenario will reward players for cleverly or stylishly solving the mystery by making the confrontation more exciting, more survivable, or more intellectually interesting. (For more on scenario design, see p. 191)

Martin Harvesson, Sample Investigator

Not counting the Keeper, there are five players in Josh's gaming group, but two of them only show up sporadically, because they travel a lot for work. So the Keeper gives Josh and the other players 18 build points for Investigative abilities, as though there were only three players, along with the standard 65 build points for General abilities. Josh reads ahead in the rule book to get a good handle on what the various abilities can do, and then gets set to build out his Investigator.

Josh starts off with the following Investigative abilities as Martin's Occupational *abilities:* Accounting, Law, Locksmith, Photography, Assess Honesty, and Reassurance. He puts a * next to each one on the character sheet. Josh decides to ignore Accounting, buying 1 rating point of Law, 3 rating points each of Locksmith, Assess Honesty, and Reassurance, and 2 rating points of Photography for a total of 12 rating points worth of Occupational abilities. At the 2-for-1 cost for Occupational abilities, that uses up 6 of Martin's Investigative build points. The bottom of his Occupational Credit Rating band is 2, so Martin begins with a Credit Rating of 2, and Josh leaves it there as good enough for an obsessed PI Josh runs down the list of remaining Investigative abilities, and decides that Cop Talk, Intimidation, and Streetwise are essential to his image of Martin, and that Evidence Collection and Forensics are too useful to ignore. He divides up Martin's remaining 12 points thusly: 3 each in the three Interpersonal abilities, 2 in Evidence Collection, and the final 1 point in Forensics.

Josh then turns to Martin's General abilities, which include the following as Occupational abilities: Disguise, Driving, Scuffling, and Shadowing, which again he marks with a *. He tentatively buys 5 rating points in each of the four, spending a net 10 build points with the half-price Occupational cost. Josh buys Martin's Sanity up to 10 from the baseline of 4, and spends 7 points to bump his Stability up to 8 (from the starting 1), for a running total of 23. Josh likewise adds 5 more points to Martin's free Health rating of 1, to get a fragile Health of 6. Josh wants Martin to be able to take care of himself in a chase or a fight, so he buys Athletics 8 (giving him an improved Hit Threshold of 4), Firearms 5 (so he can use two pistols at once), and Weapons 2, for a running total of 43. Josh packs 8 points each onto Sense Trouble and Stealth, two abilities he thinks will be very handy for a detective, for a running total of 59. Since with a Driving of 5, Martin will probably wind up being the team's wheel man, Josh spends the last 6 points on Mechanical Repair, so that Martin can fix anything he needs to drive away in a hurry.

Investigative Abilities

Investigative abilities are the meat and bone of *Trail of Cthulhu* Investigators.

Ability descriptions consist of a brief general description, followed by examples of their use in an investigation. Creative players should be able to propose additional uses for their abilities as unexpected situations confront their characters. Some General abilities can be used as Investigative abilities in some circumstances. They are always bought and built as General abilities. They are Disguise, Electrical Repair, Explosives and Mechanical Repair.

Certain specific actions may overlap between a couple of abilities. For example, you can analyze (or synthesize) an opiate poison with either Chemistry or Pharmacy; you can identify a Roman idol with Archaeology, Art History, Occult, or Theology; you can bluff your way into a sanitarium with Bureaucracy, Disguise, or Psychoanalysis.

Some abilities, like Library Use or Sense Trouble, are broadly useful, and will crop up constantly. Others may be called for many times in the course of one scenario, and not at all in others. When building your Investigator, strike a balance between the reliable workhorse abilities and their exotic, specialized counterparts. Also, strike a balance with the other Investigators in your party – a *Trail of Cthulhu* campaign is more fun, and more survivable, if all your bases are covered.

Accounting (Academic)

You understand bookkeeping and accountancy procedures; you can read and keep financial records. You can:

- *tell legitimate businesses from criminal enterprises*
- *reconstruct financial histories from old records (uncovering, say, slave-trading or smuggling)*
- *spot the telltale signs of embezzlement, bribes, blackmail, or dummy companies*
- *track payments to their source*

Anthropology (Academic)

You are an expert in the study of human cultures, from the Stone Age to the Jazz Age. (Physical anthropology is covered by Forensics.) You can:

- *identify artifacts and rituals of living cultures*
- *describe and predict the customs of a foreign group or local subculture*
- *extrapolate the practices of an unknown culture from similar examples*

Archaeology (Academic)

You excavate and study the structures and artifacts of historical cultures and civilizations. You can:

- *tell how long something has been buried and date its construction*
- *identify artifacts by culture and usage*
- *distinguish real artifacts from fakes*
- *navigate inside ruins and catacombs, including finding secret doors and hidden construction*
- *describe the customs of ancient or historical cultures*
- *spot well-disguised graves and underground hiding places*

Architecture (Academic)

You know how buildings are designed and constructed. You can:

- *guess what lies around the corner while exploring an unknown structure*
- *judge the relative strength of building materials*
- *identify a building's age, architectural style, original use, and history of modifications*
- *deduce the existence of hidden rooms, priest-holes, hyper-geometric witch-garrets, and other anomalies*
- *construct stable makeshift structures*
- *identify elements vital to a building's structural integrity*

JEROME DA

Art (Technical)

You can create some sort of art – music, painting, dance, sculpture, song, poetry, drama, and so forth. You can choose to focus on one medium or diversify: For each rating point in Art, you may select another type of art in which you are generally proficient. You may specify when you create your Investigator, or choose opportunistically in the course of play, revealing that you happen to be, say, a fine amateur contralto if circumstances suddenly require it.

Creating great (or even particularly notable) art requires spends (see p. 54); points allocated to such spends cannot be allocated to different art-forms in the future.

Art History (Academic)

You're an expert on works of art (including the practical arts such as furniture and pottery) from an aesthetic and technical point of view. You can:

- *distinguish real works from fakes*
- *tell when something has been retouched or altered*
- *identify the age of an object by style and materials*
- *accurately estimate the price of an objet d'art*
- *call to mind historical details on artists and those around them*

Assess Honesty (Interpersonal)

This is the human capacity to judge and sense motives and character. Basically, this ability allows you to tell if someone is lying to you, and (with a spend) make a decent guess about their motives.

Not all lies are verbal. You can tell when a person is attempting to project a false impression through body language.

Certain individuals – con men, actors, professional gamblers, and similar — may be so adept at lying that they never set off your built-in lie detector, or overload it by being "always on." Some people believe their own falsehoods. Psychopathic and sociopathic personality types (like most sorcerers turn out to be) and brainwashed cultists lie reflexively and without shame, depriving you of the telltale tics and gestures you use to sense when a person is deceiving you. Those who have communed excessively with the inhuman intelligences of the Mythos will occasionally "read wrong," but will similarly fail to send any useful signals to a sane watcher.

You can also use Assess Honesty to cold-read a mark for fortune-telling scams, phony séances or mentalist acts, and the like.

Astronomy (Technical)

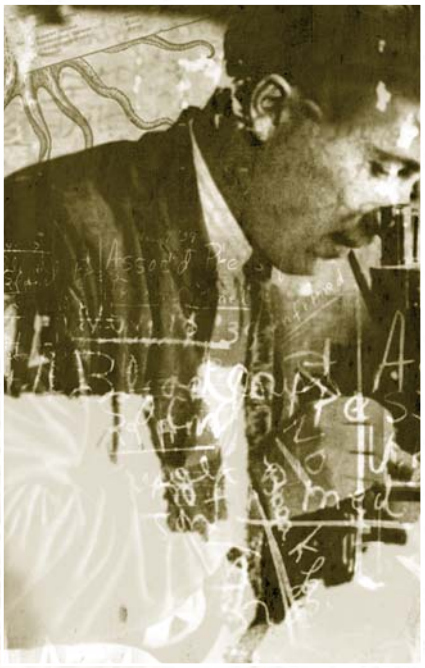
You study celestial objects, including the stars and planets. You can:

- *decipher astrological texts*
- *use a telescope, including large reflectors*
- *plot the movement of stars and planets, including which ones are overhead at any given time*
- *predict eclipses, comets, meteor showers, and other regular astronomical phenomena*

Bargain (Interpersonal)

You are an expert in making deals with others, convincing them that the best arrangement for you is also the best for them. You can:

- *haggle for goods and services*
- *gauge likely prices of items, including what someone else will pay for them*
- *mediate hostage situations or diplomatic crises*



- *swap favors or information with others*

Biology (Academic)

You study the evolution, behavior, and physical makeup of living organisms. You can:

- *tell when an animal is behaving strangely*
- *tell whether an animal or plant is natural to a given area*
- *identify an animal from samples of its hair, blood, bones, or other tissue*
- *analyze unknown ichor, scales, or slime*
- *identify a plant from a small sample*
- *isolate or detect natural poisons or venoms*

Bureaucracy (Interpersonal)

You know how to navigate a bureaucratic organization, whether it's a government office or a large business firm. You know how to get what you want from it in an expeditious manner, and with a minimum of ruffled feathers. You can:

- *convince officials to provide sensitive information*
- *gain credentials on false pretences*
- *find the person who really knows what's going on*
- *develop and maintain contacts within a bureaucracy with which you have regular dealings*
- *locate offices and files*
- *borrow equipment or supplies*

Bureaucracy is not a catch-all information gathering ability. Bureaucrats wish to convey the impression that they are busy and harried, whether or not they actually are. Most take a profound, secret joy in directing inquiries elsewhere. When players attempt to use Bureaucracy to gain information more easily accessible via other abilities (such as Library Use), their contacts snidely advise them to do their own damn legwork.

Contacts and Connections

Whenever you use Bureaucracy, Cop Talk, Credit Rating, Streetwise, or any other ability to call on a professional contact or personal connection, you must supply the Keeper with her name, residence, and specific connection to your Investigator.

If you need to spend, the size of your spend determines your contact's attitude toward your Investigator, the value (or excitement) of their information, and/or their position in their field. Of course, core clues will always be free.

The Keeper is encouraged to work your contact into the game on a regular basis; whenever it makes any narrative sense, contacts should be recurring characters (especially when you use the relevant ability again). The Keeper may also have your contacts demand favors in return, drag your Investigator into their problems, or simply slaughter them gorily and instructively.

The Intimate Correspondent

You may have a mentor, protégé, close family member, member of the clergy, or other person to whom you confide the details of your investigations, personal terrors, doubts about your sanity, and so forth. If you choose to have such an intimate correspondent, supply the Keeper with her details as per other contacts. Thenceforward, it is assumed that you regularly send updates to (and receive responses from) your intimate correspondent. (A word to the wise: Keepers who know what's good for their game might offer an extra build point or two for a player who actually writes up such letters.) Should your current Investigator die or go mad, you already have the kernel of a new, thoroughly briefed Investigator to join the party.

Chemistry (Technical)

You're trained in the analysis of chemical substances. Given lab facilities, you can:

- *among a wide variety of other materials, identify drugs, pharmaceuticals, toxins, and viruses*
- *create simple explosives, poisons, gases, and acids*
- *analyze unknown substances, alloys, compounds, etc*
- *perform ballistics and*

gunpowder analysis of bullets or other residue

- *match samples of dirt or vegetation from a piece of evidence to a scene*
- *perform chemical document analysis on ink or paper*

Cop Talk (Interpersonal)

You know how to speak the lingo of the police, and to make them feel confident and relaxed in your presence. You may be a current or former cop, or simply the kind of person they immediately identify as a solid, trustworthy citizen. You can:

- *coolly ply cops for confidential information*
- *get excused for minor infractions*
- *imply that you are a colleague, authorized to participate in their cases*
- *tell when a cop is lying to you or holding something back*
- *call in favors from law enforcement contacts*

Craft (Technical)

You can create useful physical objects, working with materials like wood, metal, jewelry, and so forth. Although the resulting cabinets, kettles, or rings may be beautiful, your focus is utility, not art. Like the Art ability, you may focus on one craft (blacksmithing, cabinetry, coopering, etc) or diversify into many; the same rules apply.

You may be able to use your Craft ability to specific investigative ends: discover a secret drawer in a desk if you are a cabinet-maker, and so forth.

Credit Rating (Interpersonal)

You are able to operate easily within your economic class, make purchases, mingle socially, cadge invitations or introductions, pick up rumors or call in favors from professional or social contacts, or secure a loan. Investigators with no Credit Rating score might be hoboes or drifters, they may just distrust banks, or they may have no real ability to schmooze. What counts as "your economic class"

depends on your Credit Rating score as follows:

Credit Rating works differently from other abilities, in that its rating level is both a description of the type of Credit Rating and a pool size. It can be seen as eight abilities in one: Credit Rating (Lower Class), Credit Rating ("Working Class"), Credit Rating (Lower Middle-Class), etc It remains a pool, because quite frankly (and especially in the 1930s) the higher your class, the more chances society gives you. Your social resources, in other words, increase generally with class and wealth.

The social aspects of Credit Rating can drift between one or two ranks if the Keeper believes it plausible; a Credit Rating 5 doctor might believably mingle with (and ask favors from) a middle-class electrician or an upper-class specialist.

Credit Rating does not necessarily describe the size of your bank account, but your ability to operate within a given socio-economic bracket. You can marry, inherit, be related to, or even befriend your way into your Credit Rating and do nothing much to maintain it besides keep up appearances. HP Lovecraft, for example, had an annual income no better than "Working Class" (if that), but his social attitudes and interpersonal skills (such as they were) were more suited for Credit Rating 4 or even 5. The Great Depression likewise plunged many people's earning power down the ranks while leaving the rest of their Credit Rating intact. In 1930s Britain, where social class is more carefully defined (and to many, far more important) than economic class, Credit Rating may purely describe "social standing."

This ability takes the forefront in heavily social adventures, urban campaigns involving the "low and the high" (where a mix of Credit Ratings in the Investigator party comes in very handy), and perhaps even in university-based campaigns where Credit Rating more closely parallels academic status rather than income. Allowing Credit Rating to become

Credit Rating	Economic Class	Signifiers	Approximate Annual Income
0	Pauper	Hobo life; rags; no permanent home; handouts or scavenge	$0-$150
1	Lower Class	Janitor, hired hand, or servant; soft cap; flop house, SRO, live with relatives; bus; cans of soup or beans	$150-$250
2	"Working Class"	Factory work or skilled service; hat; tenement apartment; bus; meat most days	$250-$1,250
3	Lower Middle-Class	Clerk or high-skilled service; neckties; shabby apartment; used car in bad condition; good Sunday meals	$1,250-$1,500
4	Middle-Class	Supervisor, lesser professional; one good suit; bungalow or decent apartment; modest car; restaurant occasionally; part-time cleaning lady	$1,500-$3,000
5	Upper Middle-Class	Professional; tailored suits; good house or fine apartment; new car or two cars; fine meals in or out; live-in servant	$3,000-$10,000
6	Upper Class	Independent income or exclusive professional; bespoke suits; mansion or penthouse; luxury cars; luxury dining; multiple domestics	$10,000-$75,000
7+	Wealthy	Landed gentry or industrial fortune; fabulous jewelry; landed estate; yachts or private planes; personal four-star chef; multi-tiered staff of domestics	$75,000+

Adding Investigative Abilities

If it's appropriate for the campaign frame, the Keeper can split abilities into more specialized areas or add new ones altogether. As long as she provides enough clues dependent on those specialist abilities, and the fine distinction makes an important contribution to the game, there can be as much granularity as she requires. For example the Book-Hounds of London campaign frame (see p. 211) adds the highly appropriate Bibliography, Forgery, Document Analysis and Textual Analysis. It's possible to do the same with General abilities, too (see p. 45)

mere shorthand for personal wealth is short-changing the ability. That said, booking passage on an ocean liner for a globe-trotting adventure is much easier with a simple "Lionel has Credit Rating 5; I assume he's in first class."

Cryptography (Academic)

You can make or break codes and ciphers in any language you can read. Given some time and a dictionary, you may be able to puzzle out foreign alphabets, translating languages by brute force.

Cthulhu Mythos (Academic)

You have begun to piece together the secret rules of the real world, rather than the ignorant scrim of physics and religion. You recognize the great names, and the truths they conceal. If you've read a Mythos tome, using this ability lets you recall any specific hints or facts from it relevant to your current situation. If you're staring at an ancient alien bas-relief, using this ability lets you perceive, with a single shocking gestalt, the horrific history it unfolds.

Using this ability costs both Sanity and Stability (see p. 74).

The primary use of this ability in the course of an investigation is to "put together the pieces" and draw upon the terrible knowledge that you have been subconsciously suppressing, achieving a horrific epiphany. The Keeper provides you with the result of your intuition, sketching out the Mythos implications of the events you have uncovered. (See p. 74 for further Keeper guidelines for this ability.) This may not be the "solution" to the mystery, although it should allow you to aim your efforts in the right direction; at the Keeper's discretion, an actual spend might provide more specific (and potentially horribly dangerous) answers.

Consider "The Dunwich Horror" to be a Trail of Cthulhu adventure. Professor Armitage uses his Cthulhu Mythos ability and realizes that old Whateley somehow incarnated Yog-Sothoth on Earth. In the story, he then reads Wilbur's diary to learn that he needs both a special incantation and the Powder of Ibn-Ghazi to destroy Yog-Sothoth's spawn. Had he not managed to get hold of the diary, Armitage could use his Cthulhu Mythos ability to "intuit" that Yog-Sothoth must be made visible before he could be fully banished, and spending a point might tell him that the Powder

Buying Cthulhu Mythos

Paralleling the rules in *Call of Cthulhu*, the default system in *Trail of Cthulhu* is that points in the Cthulhu Mythos ability cannot be bought with build points and are added only during play, mostly by reading eldritch tomes.

However, many of Lovecraft's characters, such as both Danforth and Dyer in At the Mountains of Madness, begin their adventure with some Cthulhu Mythos knowledge. To emulate such stories (or to plunge right into Cthulhoid adventure), the Keeper may allow players to create starting Investigators with points in Cthulhu Mythos. Even in such games, Cthulhu Mythos can never be an Occupational ability.

of Ibn-Ghazi would accomplish such a task. No spend would provide the formula for the Powder, except to suggest which eldritch tome might conceal similar truths.

Evidence Collection (Technical)

You're adept at casing an investigation site and at finding, bagging, and tagging important clues. You can:

- *spot hidden objects or objects of interest (including bullet casings under a couch, or drops of blue ooze behind the desk) at a crime scene or other investigation site*
- *note relationships between objects at a crime scene, reconstructing sequences of events*
- *find, transfer, take, and compare fingerprints*
- *match typewritten materials to a given machine*
- *match handwriting to a known sample*
- *store objects for forensic analysis without contaminating your samples*

Flattery (Interpersonal)

You're good at getting people to help you by complimenting or playing up to them, as subtly or blatantly as they prefer. This works particularly well with subjects who find you attractive, but that isn't strictly necessary. You could just compliment them on their exquisite taste, or the quality of their dissertation. You can get them to:

- *reveal information*
- *perform minor favors*
- *regard you as trustworthy*
- *date you (if applicable)*

It's up to you whether a high rating in Flattery means that you are physically alluring, winning and charismatic, sycophantic, or simply exude a personal magnetism unrelated to your looks or demeanor.

Forensics (Technical)

You study crime scenes and perform autopsies on deceased subjects to determine their cause and circumstances of death. You can use skeletal evidence to reconstruct the physical details (age, sex, medical condition, sometimes occupation) of the deceased. In the case of death by foul play, your examination can identify:

- *the nature of the weapon or weapons used*
- *the approximate time of death*
- *the presence of intoxicants or other foreign substances in the bloodstream or on the skin*
- *the contents of the victim's last meal*

In many cases, you can reconstruct the sequence of events leading to the victim's death from the arrangement of wounds on the body.

Although in the real world this technique was not available until the 1960s, you can determine time (and sometimes place) of death by studying the insects at the scene (or the eggs and larvae in the body).

Geology (Academic)

You are an expert on rocks, soils, minerals, and the primordial history of the Earth. You can:

- *analyze soil samples, crystals, minerals, and so forth*

- *determine the age of a rock stratum*
- *date and identify fossils*
- *evaluate soil for agriculture or industry*
- *identify promising sites for oil or water wells, mines, etc*
- *anticipate volcanism, seismic events, avalanches, and other earth phenomena*

History (Academic)

You're an expert in recorded human history, with an emphasis on its political, military, economic, and technological developments. You are also an expert in the tools historians use: documents and books. You can:

- *recognize obscure historical allusions*
- *recall important or relevant events in a given country, city, or region*
- *identify ancient languages and scripts*
- *perform textual analysis on a manuscript or book to date it or identify the author*
- *determine the age of a document*
- *tell where and when an object made during historical times was fashioned*
- *identify the period of an article of dress or costume*

Interrogation (Interpersonal)

You're trained in extracting information from suspects and witnesses in the context of a formal police-style interview. This must take place in an official setting, where the subject is confined or feels under threat of confinement, and recognizes your authority (whether real or feigned).

Intimidation (Interpersonal)

You elicit cooperation from suspects by seeming physically imposing, invading their personal space, and adopting a psychologically commanding manner. Intimidation may involve implied or direct threats of physical violence but is just as often an act of mental dominance. You can:

- *gain information*
- *inspire the subject to leave the area*
- *quell a subject's desire to attempt violence against you or others*

Languages (Academic)

For each rating point in Languages, you are verbally fluent and literate in one language other than your native tongue. You may elect to be literate in an ancient language that is no longer spoken, although the Keeper may disallow occult, primordial, or inhuman languages such as Aklo (the tongue of the serpent-folk), Naacal (the language of Mu), or Pnakotic A (the Yithian language). The Keeper may

allow overlap between related languages – an Investigator fluent in Norwegian may plausibly claim to be fluent (or at least "mostly able to get by") in Swedish, for example, without adding another rating point.

You may specify these when you create your character, or choose opportunistically in the course of play, revealing that you just happen to read, say, Assyrian when circumstances require it. You are not learning the language spontaneously but revealing a hitherto unmentioned fact about your character.

Law (Academic)

You are familiar with the criminal and civil laws of your home jurisdiction, and broadly acquainted with foreign legal systems. At a rating of 2 or more, you may be a bar-certified attorney. You can:

- *assess the legal risks attendant on any course of action*

- *understand lawyerly jargon*
- *call on legal colleagues or contacts for favors and advice*
- *argue with police and prosecutors*

Library Use (Academic)

You can ferret out information from collections of books, records, files, archives, newspaper morgues, or big piles of unsorted telegrams and correspondence. If the information lies within, and you have access to the collection, you can find it. You can also determine patterns in the data – who wrote about what and to whom, what kinds of books an eccentric collector values, what might be missing from the official files, which records seem doctored and by whom, and so forth.

Locksmith (Technical)

You can open doors and locks, and disarm alarms, without benefit of the key. (You can also find convenient windows to jimmy or coal-cellar doors to force, if need be.) Many locks require specialized tools, possession of which without a locksmith's license is a criminal offense in most jurisdictions. Very complex or tricky locks may require spends to open them speedily, to avoid noise or damage, or to relock afterward.

Using Locksmith is, in other words, a way to gather clues. A lock that won't open is like a witness that won't talk or a bloodstain you can't find: antithetical to the mystery-solving, investigative-adventure design goals of GUMSHOE and *Trail of Cthulhu*. Only safes, bank vaults, and the like – locks that exist to drive drama or conflict, rather than locks which merely hold clues — require actual tests against Difficulty.

Medicine (Academic)

You diagnose human disease, injuries, poisonings, and physical frailties, and may be broadly acquainted with veterinary medicine as well. At a rating of 2 or more, you may have a medical license. You can:

- *diagnose diseases, poisonings, and other ailments*
- *prescribe treatment for a treatable condition*
- *deliver a baby*
- *identify the extent and cause of an unconscious person's trauma*
- *detect when a person is suffering from a physically debilitating condition such as drug addiction, pregnancy, or malnutrition*
- *establish a person's general level of health*
- *identify medical abnormalities*
- *understand medical jargon*
- *call on medical colleagues or contacts for favors and advice*

At the Keeper's discretion, you may be trained in a more complex specialty, as well as the sort of general practice indicated here. The Keeper may or may not allow very elementary Forensics ("the killer used a blunt instrument; death was instantaneous") with this ability.

Occult (Academic)

You're an expert in the historical study of magic, superstition, and sorcery from the Stone Age to the present. From Theosophists to Voodoo to the Golden Dawn, you know the dates, the places, the controversies, and the legends. You can:

- *identify the cultural traditions informing a ritual by examining its physical aftermath*
- *supply historical facts and anecdotes concerning various occult traditions, demons, and legends*
- *guess the intended effect of a ritual from its physical aftermath*
- *identify occult activities as the work of informed practitioners or bored thrill-seekers*
- *fake a fortune-telling session, séance, or other occult activity*
- *read and cast a horoscope*
- *identify occult paraphernalia, grimoires, symbols, and codes*

This ability does not allow you to work magic or summon supernatural entities, even if the campaign admits the existence of non-Mythos magic. You may believe in the occult or not; the

skill functions just as well in either case.

Depending on the campaign frame, an Occult rating of 4 or more might mean that you have seen obscure names like "Cthulhu" or "Yog-Sothoth" before, but without a rating in Cthulhu Mythos you dismiss them as trivia or explain them as regional or cult variations on Tiamat or Choronzon.

If you have a rating in both Cthulhu Mythos and in Occult, you can identify a given occult ritual as actually (even if ignorantly or unintentionally) a Mythos ritual. This counts as a use of Occult, and costs no Sanity or Stability.

Oral History (Interpersonal)

You can find sources willing to talk, win their confidence, and gather (usually lengthy) oral testimony about historical events, local traditions, folklore, family legend, or gossip. This is an excellent way to do research in illiterate or semi-literate societies, and in rural or small-town communities in general. This ability also covers taking shorthand notes or making recordings without spooking your sources.

Outdoorsman (Technical)

You are familiar with working and living outdoors and in the wild. You might be a farmer, cowboy, or logger, or an amateur (or professional) fisher or hunter, or work for the Park Service. Perhaps you were merely an Eagle Scout, grew up in the back of nowhere, or served in a military unit with sufficient patrol experience "in country." You can:

- *tell when an animal is behaving strangely*
- *tell whether an animal or plant is natural to a given area*
- *find edible plants, hunt, and fish*
- *make fire and survive outdoors at night or in bad weather*
- *navigate overland, albeit more easily with a compass and a map*
- *track people, animals, or vehicles across grass or through forests*
- *hunt with dogs, including tracking with bloodhounds, assuming you have friendly dogs available*

Despite the name, there is no restriction on female characters taking this ability in either the Pulp or Purist game.

Pharmacy (Technical)

You are able to identify and compound drugs and medicines. You can:

- *identify drugs and potions, and recognize their side-effects and contraindications*
- *identify poisons and determine antidotes*
- *secure or manufacture morphine, cocaine, and other controlled substances*

Photography (Technical)

You're proficient in the use of cameras, including still and motion-picture photography. You can:

- *take useful visual records of crime scenes or expeditions*
- *develop film or plates and enhance hidden details*
- *use filters and lights to capture images only visible in infrared or ultraviolet*
- *spot manual retouching or camera trickery in a photographic image or negative*
- *take trick photographs using double exposures and other methods*
- *realistically retouch and manipulate photographic images*

Physics (Academic)

You study the fundamental forces of the universe: pressure, electromagnetism, motion, gravity, optics, and radioactivity. You can:

- *design or refit experimental machinery to test, detect, or manipulate physical forces and energies*
- *obtain and operate expensive or obscure pieces of laboratory equipment such as Crookes tubes, Geiger counters, or magnetometers*
- *understand and apply*

advanced mathematics, including non-Euclidean geometries

- *attempt to comprehend advanced or alien technologies*

Usually, building experimental machinery is a matter for Mechanical or Electrical Repair, not Physics, although Physics might be a prerequisite.

The Keeper may or may not allow physicist Investigators to "reverse-engineer" Yithian lightning guns, invent death rays, etc They should still use Mechanical or Electrical Repair to build the things, although such construction would require the Physics ability as a prerequisite.

Reassurance (Interpersonal)

You get people to do what you want by putting them at ease. This may involve fast talk, genuine sympathy, or just a calming presence. You can:

- *elicit information and minor favors*
- *allay fear or panic in others*
- *instill a sense of calm during a crisis*

Streetwise (Interpersonal)

You know how to behave among crooks, gangsters, dopers, hookers, grifters, and other habitués of the criminal underworld. You can:

- *deploy criminal etiquette to avoid fights and conflicts*
- *identify unsafe locations and dangerous people*
- *make and utilize criminal contacts – fences, black marketeers, drug dealers, arms runners, and so forth*
- *successfully price illegal goods such as drugs, stolen items, or weapons*
- *tell when practiced criminals and con artists are lying, as with Assess Honesty*
- *gather underworld rumors*

Theology (Academic)

You study human religions in their various forms, both ancient and modern. You can:

- *supply information about religious practices and beliefs*
- *quote relevant tags from the major scriptures*
- *recognize the names and attributes of various saints, gods, and other figures of religious worship and veneration*
- *identify whether a given religious practice or ritual is orthodox or heretical*
- *fake (or in some traditions, officiate at) a religious ceremony*

This ability does not allow you to work miracles, banish demons, commune with deities, or otherwise invoke supernatural power, even if the campaign admits the existence of a non-Mythos God or gods. You may believe in a given religion or not; the skill functions just as well in either case.

If you have a rating in both Cthulhu Mythos and in Theology, you can identify a given ceremony as actually (even if ignorantly or unintentionally) a Mythos ritual. This counts as a use of Theology, and costs no Sanity or Stability.

Some questions or clues may fall under both Theology and Occult, or on the boundary between them. In the 1930s, for example, most authorities hold that Voodoo falls under Occult (or Anthropology), backwoods snake-handling churches are a matter of Theology, and Satanism straddles the two fields. The Keeper may differ; if so, erring on the side of overlap is probably best.

General Abilities

Athletics

Athletics allows you to perform general acts of physical derring-do, from running to jumping to throwing bundles of dynamite to dodging falling or oncoming objects. Any physical action not covered by another ability probably falls under the rubric of Athletics.

If your Athletics rating is 8 or more, your Hit Threshold, the Target Number your opponents use when attempting to hit you in combat, is 4. Otherwise, your Hit Threshold is 3.

Conceal

You can hide things from view and conceal them from search. Your

methods might include camouflage, holding items out on your person, snaking things into drawers unobserved, building secret compartments, or even altering a thing's visual signature with paint or plaster.

This ability also allows you to discover things intentionally concealed.

Disguise

This is the skill of altering your own appearance, posture, and voice to be unrecognizable. Disguising others in anything more complex than a slouch hat or false mustache is good only for brief periods, as posture and body language are vital components in any successful disguise.

Successfully disguising yourself as an actual person known to those you're interacting with is extraordinarily difficult. Brief voice-only mimicry pits you against a Difficulty Number of 4. Face-to-face impersonation requires successful roll against a Difficulty Number of 7 every five minutes of sustained contact between you and the object of your impersonation.

Disguise doubles as an Investigative ability when used to gather clues by:

- *creating and maintaining a cover identity among the unsuspecting*
- *impersonating a generic figure, such as a security guard or a messenger*
- *briefly misrepresenting yourself, such as on the telephone or in a vestibule*

Driving

Anyone who's been taught can drive a car down the road without this ability. You, on the other hand, are a skilled defensive driver, capable of wringing high performance from even the most recalcitrant automobile, pickup truck, or omnibus. You can:

- *evade or conduct pursuit*
- *avoid collisions, or minimize damage from collisions*
- *spot tampering with a vehicle*
- *navigate, read maps, and maintain a sense of direction*
- *conduct emergency repairs*

For every 2 additional rating points in Driving, you may add an additional ground vehicle type to your repertoire, such as: motorcycle, transport truck, locomotive, buckboard, or streetcar. You may choose exotic types, like tanks and hansom cabs, although these are unlikely to see regular use in an investigation-based game. Like additional Languages, or additional varieties of Art and Craft, you may add them opportunistically in play if you have "unassigned" points. Your pool can be used for any Driving roll, regardless of the vehicle.

A table of vehicles can be found on p. 184.

Electrical Repair

You're good at building, repairing, operating, and disabling electrical devices from simple alarm systems to the most advanced radios. (You can also hot-wire a car with an electrical ignition, which is most of them built since 1920.) Given the right components, you can create jury-rigged devices from odd bits of scrap.

Electrical Repair doubles as an investigative ability when used to:

- *evaluate the quality of workmanship used to create an item*
- *determine the function of a given electrical gadget*
- *tap telephone or telegraph lines*
- *make high-quality audio recordings on records, Dictaphone cylinders, or wire*
- *read Morse Code*
- *use an electrical device in good repair as intended for an investigative (clue-gathering) purpose*

Explosives

You're an expert in bombs and booby-traps. You can:

- *defuse bombs and traps*
- *handle nitroglycerine or other dangerously unstable materials with relative safety*
- *given time, blow open safes or vaults without damaging the contents*
- *mix explosive compounds from common chemicals*
- *safely construct and*

detonate explosive devices or booby-traps of your own

Explosives doubles as an investigative ability when used to:

- *reconstruct exploded bombs*
- *for any bomb (exploded or unexploded), determine the method and materials of the bomb-maker, and deduce his sophistication, background, and skill*

Filch

Your nimble fingers allow you to unobtrusively manipulate small objects. You can:

- *pilfer clues from (or plant clues at) a crime scene under the very noses of unsuspecting authorities*
- *pick pockets*
- *plant objects on unsuspecting subjects*

Firearms

You are adept with firearms, including their repair and identification. This skill also, covers crossbows and similar trigger-operated missile weapons (see the sidebar on the next page.)

You can spend 2 points from your Firearms pool to attempt to hit a target at long range with a pistol, or at up to 500 yards with a rifle. (See p. 186) This spend does not adjust your roll; it makes it possible in the first place.

If your Firearms rating is 5 or higher, you can spend 1 point from your Firearms pool to fire two pistols in the same round. If you attack two enemies, one target's Hit Threshold increases by 2 (your choice).

A table of firearms can be found on p. 186.

First Aid

You can perform first aid on sick or injured individuals. For more on the use of this ability, see p. 63.

Fleeing

Running away is an excellent survival skill; even in Pulp mode, your characters may be doing a great deal of it. Like many of Lovecraft's spindly, neurasthenic protagonists, you can be very good at running away without being

Other Long-Range Weapons

Tcho-Tchos and other primitive tribespeople will likely attack with bows, blowguns, or other missile weapons without triggers – the Keeper can rename this skill to match, if she likes. In the unlikely event that a player simply *must* build an Investigator skilled in the use of both bows and guns, add an Archery ability.

Mi-Go and Yithians will more likely attack with energy projectors or similarly terrifying distance weapons. Again, the Keeper can rename this skill to match if desired. Investigators can never become familiar with such alien devices; they will always use them as if they were unskilled (see sidebar, p. 60).

generally good at other physical tasks. So Fleeing becomes an ability unto itself, which you can use as a substitute for Athletics when escaping during chase sequences. It does not make you any better at pursuit.

If your Fleeing rating is more than twice your final Athletics rating, you can buy rating points in Fleeing above the value at a reduced rate, getting 2 rating points for each build point spent. Hence, if your Athletics rating is 0, all your Fleeing is half-price. See p. 26 for an example.

Health

Health measures your ability to sustain injuries, resist infection, and survive the effects of toxins. When you get hit in the course of a fight, your Health pool is diminished. A higher Health pool allows you to stay in a fight longer before succumbing to your injuries.

When your Health pool is depleted, you may be dazed, wounded, or monster chow. For more on this, see p. 63.

In the Purist mode, your Health is capped at 12.

Hypnosis

Only Alienists (see p. 9) and Parapsychologists (see p. 17) can buy or use this skill, and usually only in a Pulp game.

This ability represents medical hypnosis; it is not psychic mesmerism or Dr Caligari-style mind control. You can only hypnotize a *willing* subject, and only one subject at a time. Using Hypnosis requires a Test against a Difficulty Number that varies depending on what you are using it for.

• *Simple hypnotic state:* To place a patient in a hypnotic trance, you must succeed against Difficulty 3. During this trance, she is calm and placid.

• *Establish analytic rapport:* Once you have successfully hypnotized a patient, your Psychoanalysis pool increases by 3 during any future use of Psychoanalysis on them. Your Psychoanalysis rating must be at least 3 to gain this benefit, and the 3 points must be spent on the patient.

• *Recover memories:* The patient's fragmented or buried memories, as of dreams, traumas, or murky monster attacks, can be called to the surface and "relived." This is a Difficulty 4 test. Reliving an experience that cost Stability will cost the patient the same amount again, although you may practice immediate Psychological Triage (see p. 79) to minimize the patient's shock. The Keeper is free to provide false memories if she feels you are "leading the witness."

• *Post-hypnotic suggestion:* Upon lifting the trance, you may cause your patient to perform a single action without apparent thought. You may require a "trigger phrase" or simply specify a time: ("When you get home, you'll leave the book on the desk.") Spells and other complex activities cannot be post-hypnotically induced. The patient will not accept a suggestion contrary to her normal behavior. This is a Difficulty 4 or higher test; the Keeper may increase the Difficulty based on the suggestion.

• *Ease pain:* You can relieve symptomatic pain in a patient. This removes the mechanical penalties for being hurt (see p. 63), and lasts until the patient is wounded again. This is a Difficulty 4 or higher test; the Keeper may increase the Difficulty depending on the pain's severity. *This does not work under battlefield conditions.*

• *False memories:* You can purposely implant false memories in the patient or bury real ones. This is extremely unethical without a direct therapeutic benefit (such as easing a remembered trauma). This is a Contest between your Hypnosis and the patient's Stability. Your Difficulty Number is 5; the patient resists with Difficulty 4. Again, the Keeper may increase your Difficulty based on the severity of the memory change. At the Keeper's discretion, if the

patient suffers a further trauma (such as her Stability dropping below -5 again), she may suddenly recall the truth.

Mechanical Repair

You're good at building, repairing, operating, and disabling mechanical devices from simple stick traps to the most complex adding machines or steam turbines. (With the exception of simple latches, working with locks is covered by the Locksmith ability.) Given the right components, you can create jury-rigged devices and booby-traps from odd bits of scrap.

Mechanical Repair doubles as an investigative ability when used to:

- *evaluate the quality of workmanship used to create an item*
- *determine the function of a given mechanical gadget*
- *use a mechanical device in good repair as intended*

For every rating point in Mechanical Repair, you may operate and (where relevant) drive a type of heavy machinery, such as: tank, back-hoe, construction crane, or steam shovel. You may choose exotic types, like ocean liner steam engines or heavy artillery, although these are unlikely to see regular use in an investigation-based game. Like Languages, Driving, Art, etc, you may add types opportunistically, "suddenly recalling" your service on a tramp steamer, or the summer you worked construction on Boulder Dam.

Piloting

Although almost anyone can paddle a canoe or even row a dinghy, you can pilot small boats (motorboats, sailboats, dories) or single-engine light aircraft (barnstormers, crop dusters) with professional aplomb and serene confidence. You can:

- *evade or conduct pursuit*
- *anticipate bad weather*
- *avoid collisions, or minimize damage from collisions*
- *spot tampering with a vehicle*
- *navigate by compass or the stars, read maps, and maintain a sense of direction*
- *conduct emergency repairs*

A rating of 1 in Piloting allows you to select either small boats or single-engine light aircraft. For every 2 additional rating points in Piloting, you may add an additional air or water vehicle type to your repertoire, such as: small boats, single-engine light aircraft, gliders, flying boats, multi-engine planes, yachts, multi-masted sailing ships. You may choose exotic types, like zeppelins, submarines, and autogiros, although these are unlikely to see regular use in an investigation-based game. Like the additional vehicles available with extra points in Driving, you may add them opportunistically in play if you have "unassigned" points. You may spend any of your points on any vehicle.

A table of aircraft can be found on p. 185.

Preparedness

You expertly anticipate the needs of any investigation by packing a kit efficiently arranged with necessary gear. Assuming you have immediate access to your kit, you may be able to produce an object the team needs to overcome an obstacle. You make a simple test (p. 56); if you succeed, you have the item you want. You needn't do this in advance of the adventure, but can dig into your kit bag (provided you're able to get to it) as the need arises.

Items of obvious utility to a Mythos investigation do not require a test. These include but are not limited to: notebooks or paper, writing implements and ink, flashlights, candles and matches, colored chalk, common tools and hardware, pen-knives, magnifying glasses, pocket mirrors, string, sandwiches, and brandy.

Other abilities imply the possession of basic gear suitable to their core tasks. Characters with First Aid or Medicine have their own first aid kits or medical bags; Photographers come with cameras, film, and flash bulbs. If you have Firearms, you usually have a gun, and so on. Preparedness does not intrude into their territory. It covers general-purpose investigative equipment, plus oddball items – a telegraph key, a baseball, a gas mask — that suddenly come in handy in the course of the story.

The sorts of items you can produce at a moment's notice depend not on your rating or pool, but on narrative credibility. If the Keeper determines that your possession of an item would seem ludicrous, anachronistic, or out of genre, you don't get to roll for it. You simply don't have it. Any item which elicits a laugh from the group when suggested is probably out of bounds.

Inappropriate use of the Preparedness ability is like pornography. Your Keeper will know it when she sees it.

Psychoanalysis

You can provide comfort, perspective, and solace to the mentally troubled. You may be a Freudian alienist, a priest or pastor, or just an empathetic and intuitive individual.

You can restore panicked Investigators to a state of calm (see p. 79), restore lost Stability points (see p, 79) and treat any long-term mental illnesses they accrue in the course of their activities (see p. 81).

Adding General Abilities

If it's appropriate for the campaign frame, your Keeper can split abilities into more specialized areas or add new ones altogether. For example, in a campaign of world-spannning exploration, she could split Piloting into Piloting (Boats) and Piloting (Light Aircraft), and add Caving as a new ability. You should only do this if the additional complication is outweighed by the benefits in spotlighting Investigators' abilities. See also Adding Investigative Abilities on p. 32.

Riding

Although staying on a tame, untroubled walking horse (on flattish terrain, anyway) is relatively easy once one gets the hang of it, and staying on a mule or burro even easier, you are a gifted equestrian. You can gallop even recalcitrant or spirited horses, donkeys, and mules past distractions and across the countryside. You can:

- *evade or conduct mounted pursuit*
- *care for, groom, shoe, and stable mounts*
- *take care of, prepare, and use riding gear such as saddles and bridles*
- *calm a nervous mount*
- *drive a horse-drawn wagon or cart*
- *wield a weapon while riding*

For every additional 2 rating points in Riding, you may add an additional riding animal: camel, water buffalo, or elephant. You may not add Mythos mounts such as shantaks. You pool may be spent on Riding any or all of these creatures.

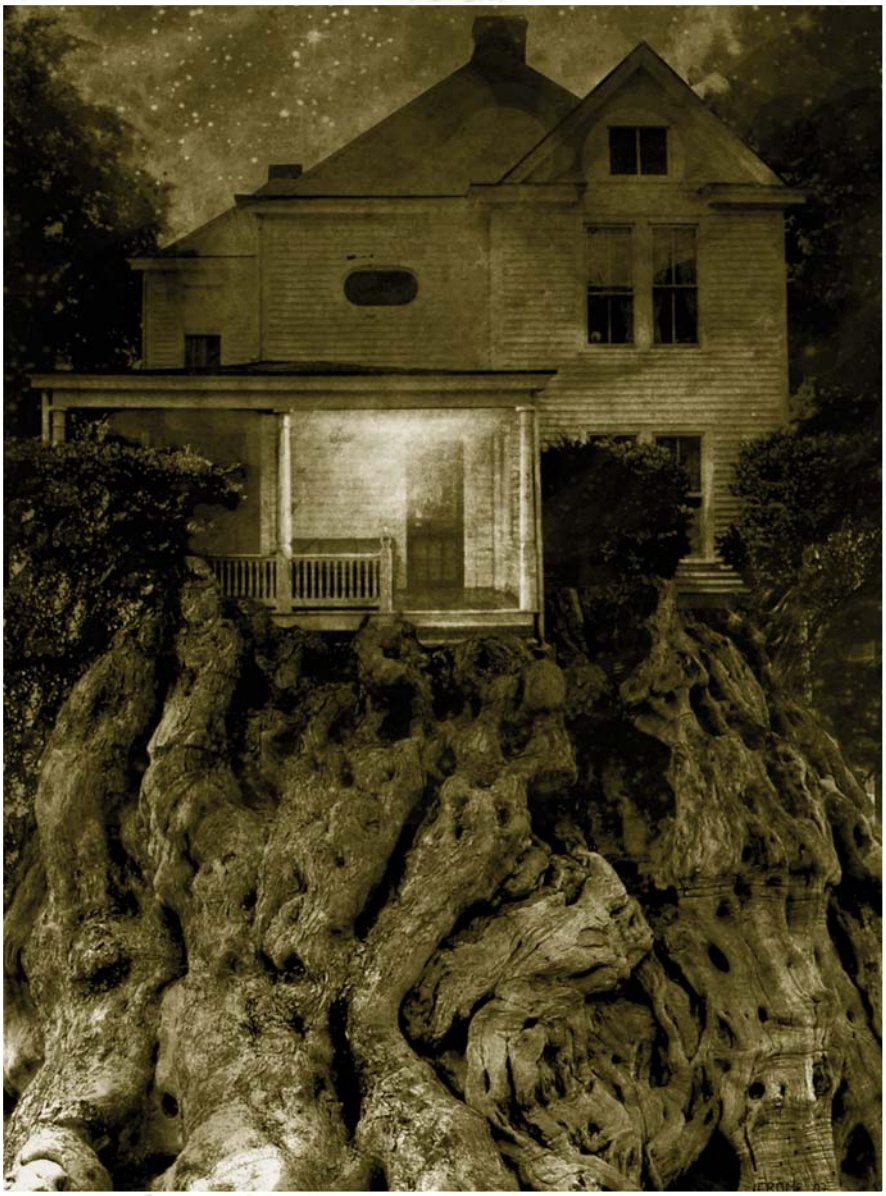
Sanity

Exposure to the truths of the Cthulhu Mythos shatters the core of the human psyche by stripping away all illusions of human significance, benign nature, and loving God, leaving nothing but the terrifying vistas of stark, cosmic nihilism. Your Sanity rating indicates the degree to which you can sustain belief in any fundamental human concerns whatsoever. Unlike other abilities, you never test your Sanity or spend points from your Sanity pool. They are leached away by the Outside.

Once your Sanity reaches 0, your beliefs – and what you used to consider your soul – have been completely corroded beyond repair. In game terms, you become an NPC, shut away in a sanitarium forever, if you are fortunate, or a willing servitor of the uncaring Great Old Ones if not.

It is important to note that a Mythos initiate might have a Sanity of 0 and seem completely normal after rebuilding his intellect around the revealed cosmic truth, and a raving madman who believes himself to be Jesus Christ reborn might retain a Sanity rating at almost any level – if his mania is of purely human construction, rather than the result of a communion with Yog-Sothoth.

If you have a Cthulhu Mythos rating at all, your Sanity rating can never be higher than 10 minus your Cthulhu Mythos rating. (If you know nothing about the Mythos, your Sanity can be as high as you care to buy it. You will lose these points if you gain Cthulhu Mythos.) For a longer-term, more survivable, or pulpier game, the Keeper may wish to adjust this ceiling upward, or shift it downward for a shorter, deadlier, or starker game. (Further rules for Sanity appear on p. 69.)



You get Sanity 4 for free.

Pillars of Sanity

For each 3 full rating points your Investigator possesses in Sanity, you must define one Pillar of Sanity: some human concern that he believes in and trusts implicitly. Pillars of Sanity are abstract principles, not individual people or objects. Pillars of Sanity can be damaged or destroyed by Mythos revelations (see p. 75) Some examples of Pillars include:

- *Religious faith (can be a specific denomination,*

Martin Harvesson, Sample Investigator

Martin has a Sanity rating of 10 and a Stability rating of 8. Josh has to pick three Pillars of Sanity, and decides that Martin believes in a moral code, loves Chicago, and holds fast to a notion of human worth. The first and third help support his Drive for Revenge on whoever, or whatever, killed his partner.

The Keeper decides to use the Sources of Stability rule, since she wants the adventures to be rooted in city life while also featuring globe-spanning horror. Josh only has to pick 2 Sources of Stability to help keep Martin grounded, so he picks Martin's secretary Joan (a plucky, fast-talking broad with a secret soft spot for Martin) and Martin's former partner on the force, Lieutenant McAllen (a straight cop in a bent city). Josh decides that Martin left the force after he had to take the rap for something that might have splashed mud on McAllen, which explains his low Credit Rating.

or a general trust in a benevolent or rational deity)

- *Family (especially family honor, purity of one's blood, and suchlike)*
- *Human dignity and value*
- *Scientific progress or the value of the intellect*
- *Physical laws and the reality of scientific knowledge*
- *The goodness, beauty, or worthiness of Nature or the environment*
- *The innate goodness of mankind*
- *Moral principles*
- *Aesthetics or the high principles of art*
- *Epicureanism; living life to the fullest*
- *Patriotism and national virtue*
- *Love of one's home city or town*

As you might expect, Cthulhu Mythos revelations that undermine these Pillars will cost you additional Sanity.

Scuffling

You can hold your own in a hand-to-hand fight, whether you wish to kill, knock out, restrain, or evade your opponent. It is up to you whether high rating levels in this ability indicate specific skills (such as boxing, wrestling, or le savate), long practice in bar brawls, or just a devastating and manly right cross. The use of blackjacks, brass knuckles, coshes, saps, rolls of quarters or shillings tucked up in the fist are treated as Scuffling

Sense Trouble

This ability allows you to perceive (either with sight or other senses) potential hazards to yourself or others. For example, you can:

- *hear the splash of the Deep One dropping into the sewer behind you*
- *see a flittering shape cross the moon*
- *smell the sharp juniper reek of the Treaders of the Dust as they silently approach*
- *notice the freshly split human bones hastily hidden behind the easel*
- *have a bad feeling about that eerily hunchbacked priest at the seemingly deserted cathedral*

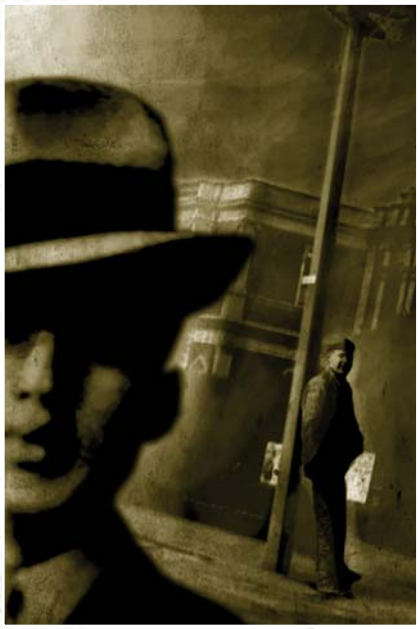
Players never know the Difficulty Numbers for Sense Trouble before deciding how many points to spend, even in games where Keepers generously inform the players of other Difficulty Numbers. Players must blindly choose how much to spend. The Keeper does not roll in secret, so even a failed roll allows the group the sense that something is amiss. They just don't know exactly what this is. Think of it as the game system equivalent of tension-building eerie music in a horror movie.

Keepers should never require the use of this general ability to find clues to the mystery at hand. Instead, use Investigative abilities, defaulting to Evidence Collection when no ability seems more appropriate. Sense Trouble is for a scenario's action-oriented sequences. In short, if not seeing something will get you attacked, it's Sense Trouble.

Shadowing

You're good at following suspects without revealing your presence. You can:

- *guide a team to follow a suspect for short periods, handing off to the next in*



sequence, so the subject doesn't realize he's being trailed

- *use binoculars or telescopes to keep watch on a target from a distance*
- *find undetectable vantage points*
- *hide in plain sight*
- *anticipate blind spots in your coverage and plan for them, or use them to lose your own shadowers*

Stability

Whether caused by an onrushing shoggoth, a horde of ghouls, or an NKVD torturer, shock and fear take a toll on the mind and nervous system. Mythos and non-Mythos threats alike can send Investigators into screeching panic, near-catatonic funk, or blind frenzy. Your Stability rating indicates your resistance to mental trauma.

Although the sudden revelation or confirmation of the truths of the Cthulhu Mythos can damage your Stability, so can service in the Great War or the deaths of your beloved family in a fire. In other words, although losing Sanity can decrease Stability, the two are not directly correlated. (See p. 70.) A Sanity 0 cultist of Hastur might be a gibbering backwoods cannibal (with an appropriately low Stability) or a sophisticated, wealthy art critic with a Stability higher than that of any of the Investigators who seek to take him down.

You get Stability 1 for free.

In a Purist game, your Stability is capped at 12.

Sources of Stability

This option is appropriate if the campaign frame has a soap-opera-like element it.

For every 3 full rating points you possess in Stability, you must name one person that keeps you sane when the terrors of the world threaten to shred your psyche. This network of friends, colleagues and family provides you with a motivation to keep fighting the good fight and going back into that crypt every night.

A name and identifying phrase are sufficient for each. You may not use fellow Investigators; they go through the same stresses you do and remind you of the horrors you confront. It's permissible, but risky, for multiple Investigators to lean on the same folks as members of their support network.

Relying on others is a source of strength, but also of danger. Once you come to the attention of entities or cultists of the Mythos, they may use your loved ones against you. They may turn them to evil, possess them, or take the tried and true route of subjecting them to horrible tortures. If anything bad happens to them, you not only face immediate, difficult Stability tests, but may permanently lose the rating points they're linked to. Your wife, mother, or child can no longer soothe your spirit if you can only visit their scarred and broken bodies in a secluded mental hospital.

Stealth

You're good at moving (and standing still) without being noticed. You can:

- *move silently*
- *hide in shadows or cover*
- *evade visual security, whether guards (usual) or cameras (unusual)*
- *listen at doors or windows without being overheard yourself*

Use Stealth when you are creeping around unnoticed; if you are trying to sneakily lose a pursuer, use Shadowing. (Outrunning a pursuer is Athletics or Fleeing.)

Weapons

You are skilled in the use of personal hand weapons such as knives, swords, or whips. The use of blackjacks, brass knuckles, coshes, saps, rolls of quarters or shillings tucked up in the fist are treated as Scuffling (see p. 47).

TRAIL OF CTHULHU
BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name: Josh

Sanity[1]			
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15
Hit Threshold[3] 4			

Stability			
-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health			
-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Martin Harvesson

Drive: Revenge (for dead partner)

Occupation:[2] Private Investigator

Occupational benefits: Spend points 2-for-1 after Rolling Disguise or Shadowing

Pillars of Sanity: Moral Code, Loves Chicago, notion of human worth

Build Points: 0

Academic Abilities	Interpersonal Abilities	General Abilities
* Accounting		
Anthropology	* Assess Honesty 3	Athletics 8
Archaeology	Bargain	Conceal
Architecture	Bureaucracy	* Disguise[(1)] 10
Art History	Cop Talk 3	* Driving 10
Biology	Credit Rating 2	Electrical Repair[(1)]
Cthulhu Mythos[4]	Flattery	Explosives[(1)]
Cryptography	Interrogation	Filch
Geology	Intimidation 3	Firearms[5] 5
History	Oral History	First Aid
Languages[6]	* Reassurance 3	Fleeing[7]
	Streetwise 3	Health[9] 6
		Hypnosis[8]
		Mechanical Repair[(1)] 6
	Technical Abilities	Piloting
* Law 1		Preparedness
Library Use	Art	Psychoanalysis
Medicine	Astronomy	Riding
Occult	Chemistry	Sanity[9] 10
Physics	Craft	Stability[9] 8
Theology	Evidence Collection 2	* Scuffling
	Forensics 1	Sense Trouble 8
	* Locksmith 3	* Shadowing 10
	Outdoorsman	Stealth 8
	Pharmacy	Weapons 2
	* Photography 2	

SOURCES OF STABILITY:	CONTACTS AND NOTES
Joan (Plucky, fast-talking secretary) Lieutenant McAllen (former partner)	

[1] In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

[2] Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a * before assigning points.

[3] Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

[(1)] These General abiltities double up as Investigative abilities

[4] Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

[5] In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

[6] Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

[7] Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

[8] Only Alienists and Parapsycholigists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

[9] You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

JÉRÔME 07

Clues, Tests and Contests

"Through shadowy dreams they send a marching line

Of still more shadowy shapes and hints and views;

Echoes from outer voids, and subtle clues

To things which they themselves cannot define."

— The Fungi From Yuggoth: Harbour Whistles

Once you've built your Investigator, it becomes the job of the Keeper to lure him and his companions into the bowels of a horrific mystery. Every *Trail of Cthulhu* scenario presents such a mystery, with a horrific tale behind it. Something awful has happened. Usually, somebody or something has done it. The Investigators must figure out what it is, and who did it, and how to stop it from happening again.

The Keeper figures out (or reads an adventure scenario describing) the what, who, and how before the game starts. She then has to help the other players tell the story of how their heroic Investigators also figure out the what, who, and how. The Keeper's scenario notes are not a story. The story occurs as you, the team of players, bring this skeletal structure to life through the actions of your Investigators. The story proceeds from scene to scene, where you determine the pace, discovering clues and putting them together. Your Investigators interact with locations, gathering physical evidence, and with supporting characters run by the Keeper, gathering expert and eyewitness testimony.

As the Keeper lays out the investigation scene by scene, and you interact with the locations and supporting cast (and occasionally horrible monsters), the story unfolds. The first scene presents the mystery you have to solve. You may stumble onto it, be called in by your old mentor, or just hear about it after the fact. You then perform legwork: hitting the libraries, buddying up to the cops, collecting local legends, or following suspicious foreigners. Your goal is to collect information that tells you more about the case. Each scene contains such information pointing to a new scene, and painting the details of the horror bit by bit. Certain scenes may put a new twist on the investigation, as the initial mystery turns out to be just one layer of the onion. To move from scene to scene, and to solve the overall mystery, you must gather clues. They fuel your forward momentum.

As you accumulate clues, you figure out enough to assemble them into a course of action, and eventually into a solution. The Investigators track down the villainous cult, mad sorcerer, uncanny phenomenon, or alien presence behind the horror. In *Trail of Cthulhu,* the solution to the mystery usually leads to (or happens during) a confrontation with some monstrous evil. Once the players know where the evil lurks, they can send their Investigators toward it. There, rules for challenging tests and dangerous contests come into their own.

Clues

"There, indeed, no stolen child was found, despite the tales of screams and the red sash picked up in the areaway; but the paintings and rough inscriptions on the peeling walls of most of the rooms, and the primitive chemical laboratory in the attic, all helped to convince the detective that he was on the track of something tremendous."

— The Horror at Red Hook

The GUMSHOE engine, which powers the *Trail of Cthulhu* rules, separates the business of finding the clues from the business of confronting (or running away from) monstrous evil. In a fictional mystery, whether it's a mystery novel, a straight-up detective show like *Columbo*, a medical mystery like *House*, or a police procedural like *CSI* or *Law and Order*, the emphasis isn't on finding the clues in the first place. Usually, the heroes are drowning in clues. When it really matters, you may get a paragraph telling you how Holmes crawled around on the

carpet with his magnifying glass, or see a montage of serious-looking dudes with Luminol and Ziploc bags. But the action really starts after the detectives – the Investigators – gather the clues.

INVESTIGATIVE SCENARIOS ARE NOT ABOUT FINDING CLUES. THEY ARE ABOUT INTERPRETING THE CLUES YOU DO FIND.

Figuring out the puzzle is hard enough for a group of armchair detectives, without someone withholding half the pieces from them. GUMSHOE, therefore, makes the finding of clues all but automatic, as long as you get to the right place in the story and have the right ability. That's when the fun part begins, when the players try to put the components of the puzzle together.

Gathering Clues

Gathering clues is simple. All you have to do is:

1. **Get your Investigator into a scene where relevant information can be gathered,**
2. **Have the right ability to discover the clue, and**
3. **Tell the Keeper that you're using it.**

As long as you do these three things, you will never fail to gain a piece of necessary information. *It is never dependent on a die roll.* If you ask for it, you will get it.

You can specify exactly what you intend to achieve: "I use Art History to see if the idol is authentically Late Minoan."

You can convey a wider speculation to the Keeper: "I use Oral History to find the town drunk and pump him for local legends." You sensibly guess that the town is weird, but you don't want to waste time going from NPC to NPC trying to read the Keeper's mind and figure out which one contains the magic plot pellet. Nor should you. In this example, if the Keeper planned on having the local busybody provide the info instead of the local rummy, she can either change the information's source retroactively or tell you something like: "Before you can talk to Old Silas, an interfering bluehair chases him off. Fortunately, she's eager to spill the dirt on her neighbors' sketchy family history."

Or you can engage in a more general informational fishing expedition: "I use Evidence Collection to search the alley," or "I use Chemistry to test the meteorite."

Or, the Keeper might ask if you, or anyone has a particular ability.

If your suggested action corresponds to a clue in the scenario notes, the Keeper provides you the information arising from the clue.

Languid dilettante Willoughby Boothroyd is on the trail of a cult of deranged, Yog-Sothoth-worshipping alchemists. He searches Beacon Hill for their Boston headquarters. His player, Zachary, says "I stroll the streets at sunset looking for alchemical glass in the windows." This is all

Simple Searches

Many clues can be found without any ability whatsoever. If an ordinary person could credibly find a clue simply by looking in a specified place, the clue discovery occurs automatically. You, the reader, wouldn't need to be a trained investigator to find a bloody footprint on the carpet in your living room, or notice a manila envelope taped to the underside of a table at the local pub. By that same logic, the Investigators don't require specific abilities to find them, either. When players specify that they're searching an area for clues, they're performing what we call a **simple search**. To perform simple searches, they must narrow down the scope of their examination by specifying a particular area or object within the scene:

- "I look in the roll-top desk."
- "Is there anything in the tub?"
- "Dr Markesan is checking the bottles in the kitchen."

On the other hand, characters who do have relevant abilities can glean clues without getting this specific. With Evidence Collection, clues become available to a player simply by being on the scene and indicating that you're looking for them.

Example Benefits

Here some special benefits you might get from investigative point spends.

The benefit gives you an advantage in a future contest of General abilities.

- you find your petrol tank has been punctured before you drive the vehicle
- you discover that Shoggoths are affected by electricity, before you encounter one
- you notice that there is a hole in the fence around the back of the complex or that the guards go off-duty at 6.00pm
- the plans show that the bomb must remain horizontal if you are not to trigger it
- Credit Rating might get you access to an NPC psychoanalyst or doctor.

The benefit gives a favorable impression to supporting characters.

- you recognize and recover stolen artwork for the original owner, who will then be more inclined to help you
- you spend points to discover a hidden room where there is a hostage who can either give clues or even help with General abilities.
- You spend Credit Rating to cover up mistakes or buy your way past those who stand in your way

The benefit can lead to a flashback scene.

- you find an insect and receive a flash back to a time you were in the Amazon basin, alone, with one of the creatures crawling up your leg – it wasn't poisonous after all.
- you get your clue the form of a recalled lecture given by your mentor

Point spends can help you resolve a moral dilemma. If your character finds the action required to get a Core Clue distasteful you might make a point spend to avoid this.

- Intimidating a local might get you a core clue for free, but a two point Reassurance spend on the same local could get you the same information without upsetting your source.
- Flattery, followed by a night of debauchery, might get you a core clue, but if this offends your Investigator's moral (or aesthetic) sensibilities, a Credit Rating spend (to get into a showplace restaurant or dance hall) might get you the same information.»

Extra point spends might speed up an investigation

- a Bureaucracy spend supplemented by Flattery might get the photographs processed a day earlier, your car repaired more quickly,
- the mysterious delay in processing your visa application might disappear with a Credit Rating spend.

A point spend might get you some dedicated pool points (see p. 54)

- A Library Use spend might allow you to find a book which gives you a History (New England) dedicated point pool.

An Technical spend spend might allow you to create a notable work. An Academic spend, to write an influential paper or join an appropriate society

- An Art spend would allow you to create a sculpture or painting
- A Geology spend gets your paper on anamolous artifacts found in Archaean slate published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of London.

An impressive point spend may even lead to refreshment of Stability points (see p. 79)

he needs to do to get the information he needs to proceed to the next scene, a confrontation with the Boston cult leader in his mansion, so the Keeper says "You see a telltale flash of intense violet from the cupola of the early Georgian townhouse at the end of Wellington Court."

Note that Zachary didn't even have to specify what ability he used. He could have used Boothroyd's Architecture, Chemistry, Occult, or even Credit Rating (strolling through rich neighborhoods as if you belong there) to uncover that clue.

For each scene, the Keeper designates a core clue. This is the clue you absolutely need to move to the next scene, and thus to complete the entire investigation. Keepers will avoid making core clues available only with the use of obscure investigative abilities, although the Investigator group as a whole will usually have access to all, or

nearly all, of them. Even if the Investigator does not request a clue, the Keeper will let any person with a suitable ability know that the clue is available. As you get more familiar with the GUMSHOE system, you'll be able to seamlessly roleplay using your abilities, and the Keeper will be able to seamlessly slip you needed clues when you do.

Spends and Benefits

Certain clues allow you to gain special benefits by spending points from the relevant investigative ability pool. Each benefit costs either 1 or 2 points from the relevant pool, depending on the difficulty of the additional action and the scope of the reward. The act of spending points for benefits is called a **spend**. The Keeper's scenario notes may specify that you get Benefit X for a 1-point spend, or Benefit Y for a 2-point spend. When asking you if you want to spend, the Keeper always tells you how much it will cost. During your first few scenarios, your Keeper will offer you the opportunity to spend additional points as you uncover these clues. After that it's up to you to ask if it there's anything to be gained by spending extra time or effort on a given clue. You can even propose specific ways to improve your already good result; if your suggestion is persuasive or entertaining, the Keeper may award you a special benefit not mentioned in her scenario notes.

Any additional information gained from a spend provides flavor, but is never required to solve the case or move on to a new scene. Often a benefit makes your Investigator seem clever, powerful, or heroic. It may allow an ability to take less time than normal, or succeed more flashily. It may grant you benefits useful later in the scenario, frequently by making a favorable impression on NPCs. Additional information can also provide information that is usefully applied to later contests involving General **abilities:** discovering that shoggoths love electricity, or that your car's petrol tank is empty, or your gun has been unloaded.

A benefit may allow you to leap forward into the story by gaining a clue that would otherwise only become apparent in a later scene. On occasion the additional information adds an emotional dimension to the story or ties into the Investigator's Drive, past history, or civilian life. If you think of your *Trail of Cthulhu* game as a TV series, an extra benefit gives the actor playing your Investigator a juicy spotlight scene.

Dedicated Pool Points

Occasionally, the Keeper may give you extra pool points you can only use in a given circumstance or on a given subject. These are called **dedicated pool points,** and usually come from reading books of lore, sudden communion with alien perceptions, mental illness, or other specialized stimuli. In most cases, dedicated pool points stack on top of your rating. For example, if you have an Archaeology rating of 2, and you read a tome granting you 2 dedicated pool points for Valusian ruins, you have 4 points you can spend on Archaeology, but 2 of them can only be spent investigating the relics and artifacts of that ancient serpent-folk kingdom.

In a way this is what the rules already do when, for example, they separate Cop Talk from Reassurance, but slicing abilities too thinly makes it hard to build competent Investigators.

"Is there another way into that house?" asks Zachary. The Keeper knows that there are old smuggler's tunnels into most of the basements in this neighborhood. This information isn't necessary to move forward – going in the front door will get to the confrontation just as fast — but initiative should always be rewarded where possible.

"Would you rather spend 1 Architecture point or 2 Credit Rating points?" asks the Keeper. If Zachary picks Architecture, Boothroyd will "just happen to remember" seeing smuggler's tunnels in a similar Georgian house in the neighborhood. But Zachary picks the bigger spend for the bigger benefit, reducing his Credit Rating pool from its maximum of 6 down to 4, and the Keeper says "As it happens, you attended a soiree at young Brickman's the other month, and he showed you the old smuggler's tunnel in his wine cellar and said he'd gone exploring

one time — 'visited the cellar of every house built before 1750' in his words. He lives a block away, and you're sure he'd be happy to stand you a glass and let you into his tunnel."

This gives Boothroyd a possible ally or contact, a possible secure retreat or unexpected entry, and a distinctive character moment all at once – well worth the 2 points.

Boothroyd leans on Brickman's bell with his stick. "Thought I might see if your Medoc has improved any," he says. "And speaking of your cellar…"

A good Keeper will always try to come up with something cool to reward you for spending points, whether or not the benefits are specified in her scenario, because it makes the game more colorful and fun for everyone. Spending points on benefits encourages the Keeper to wire your Investigator ever more deeply into the story and into her world, putting subtle psychological pressure on her to keep your Investigator alive. There's even an optional Pulp-idiom rule on p. 79 that lets you regain some Stability by coming up with a confidence-boosting and dramatic spend. Thus, it is to your advantage to propose cool benefits to the Keeper.

If you wish to make a spend in a situation where the Keeper has no special benefit to offer you, and cannot think of one that pertains at all to the investigation, you do not lose the points you wish to spend.

Who Finds It?

Sometimes you know that a clue will definitely be found during a given scene, but must decide which Investigator does so. Most often, the clue, though easily found on a cursory examination of a scene, will be somewhat inconspicuous. The bloody footprint might be under a piece of furniture. The table with the envelope taped to it might be on the other side of the diner. Because it is mildly inconspicuous, it doesn't make sense that everybody will spot it at the exact same second.

If one or more players have a relevant ability, choose the player with the highest current pool in that ability. If no one has a relevant ability, or no ability seems to apply to the situation, ask yourself which player seems most in need of a win. Pick either the Investigator who has received the least time in the spotlight, or suffered the worst setbacks, during the current session.

This technique of doling out positive moments according to dramatic need can also be applied to other benefits, from lucky breaks to romantic opportunities, to which no ability clearly applies.

Inconspicuous Clues

"Examining one day the reserve specimens roughly set on the storage shelves in a rear room of the museum, my eye was caught by an odd picture in one of the old papers spread beneath the stones."

— "The Call of Cthulhu"

Sometimes the Investigators instinctively notice something without actively looking for it. Often this situation occurs in places they're moving through casually and don't regard as scenes in need of intensive searching. The team might pass by a concealed door, spot a droplet of blood on the marble of an immaculate hotel lobby, or approach a truck with dynamite planted beneath it. Interpersonal abilities can also be used to find inconspicuous clues. The classic example is of a character whose demeanor or behavioral tics establish them as suspicious.

It's unreasonable to expect players to ask to use their various abilities in what appears to be an innocuous transitional scene. Otherwise they'd have to spend minutes of game time with every change of scene, running down their abilities in obsessive checklist fashion. That way madness lies.

Instead the Keeper asks which character has the highest current pool in the ability in question. (When in doubt for what ability to use for a basic search, the Keeper defaults to Evidence Collection.)

If two or more pools are equal, it goes to the one with the highest rating. If ratings are also equal,

their characters find the clue at the same time.

Boothroyd and a lady artist of his acquaintance, Letitia Vandiver, are on their way to pick up the rest of the Investigator team for their midnight visit to the smuggler's tunnels when they pass an art gallery used by the cult to recruit wealthy members.

The Keeper decides that Art History will reveal that the paintings in the windows are fresh works by artists long thought dead. Both characters have the skill; Boothroyd has 2 points in his pool, while Letitia has 3.

"Letitia," says the Keeper, "you're something of a devotee of Vernet, and you'd swear that was a brand-new Vernet in that gallery window – if he hadn't been dead for 100 years, that is."

Tests

A test occurs when the outcome of an ability use is in doubt. Tests apply to General skills only. Unlike information gathering attempts, tests carry a fairly high chance of failure. They may portend dire consequences if you lose, provide advantages if you win, or both.

Even in the case of General skills, the Keeper should call for tests only at dramatically important points in the story, and for tasks of exceptional difficulty. Most General ability uses should allow automatic successes, with possible bonuses on point spends, just like Investigative abilities.

Die Rolls

All die rolls in *Trail of Cthulhu* use a single ordinary (six-sided) die.

There are two types of tests: simple tests and contests.

Simple Tests

A simple test occurs when the Investigator attempts a difficult action without active resistance from another person or entity. Examples include driving a treacherous road, jumping a

Difficulty Numbers and Story Pacing

Just as the *Trail of Cthulhu* system keeps the story moving by making all crucial clues accessible to the Investigators, Keepers must ensure that tests and contests essential to forward narrative momentum can be easily overcome. Assign relatively low Difficulty Numbers of 4 or less to these crucial plot points. Reserve especially hard Difficulty Numbers for obstacles that provide interesting but nonessential benefits.

For example, if the characters have to sneak past the Nazi guards into the Hamburg warehouse in order to stage the final confrontation, assign the relatively low Difficulty Number of 4 to the task. If it seems like they "realistically" ought to have a tougher time of it, insert a detail justifying their ease of success. The storm-trooper assigned to watch one section of the dock might be found with his throat torn out by the Deep Ones the SS necromancers have – imperfectly – summoned, for example.

One way to avoid this situation is to prevent the continuation of the game be dependent on a single General contest (other than those associated with bodily or mental harm) and offer other, less pleasant, options, for example, if they fail to climb the fence, they can crawl through the sewers.

Option - You Always Succeed

We've never had this issue reported as a problem, other than in theory. The following rule is more in keeping with the basic GUMSHOE premise, but might not suit everyone. Where it is essential to overcome a General obstacle, allow success whatever the result, but give a negative consequence other than failure for the roll. For example, the PC climbs the fence, but receives an injury.

crevasse, sneaking into a building, shooting a target, booby-trapping a doorway, or remaining steady in the face of squamous horror.

The Keeper determines how hard any given action is by assigning it a Difficulty Number ranging from 2 to 8, where 2 offers only a slim chance of failure and 8 verges on the impossible. The player rolls a single die; if the result is equal to or higher than the Difficulty Number, the character succeeds. Before rolling the die, the player may choose to spend any number of points from the relevant ability pool, adding these to the final die result. Players who forget to specify the number of points they want to spend before rolling are stuck with the unmodified result.

In the game world, expenditure of pool points in this way represents special effort and concentration by the Investigator, the kind you can muster only so many times during the course of an adventure.

Martin wants to climb a high cemetery wall to see if ghouls lurk on the other side. The Keeper needs the group to get to the other side of the wall and therefore assigns the relatively low Difficulty Number of 3 to the task. Martin's player, Josh, has a full 8 points in his Athletics pool. He decides that he really needs a win on this one and decides to spend half of them on the attempt. He rolls a 5. With the 4 points from his pool, this gets a final result of 9. Displaying impressive aerobatic grace, Martin vaults onto the wall.

The Purist *Trail of Cthulhu* setting is meant to be harsh and deadly in body and spirit. Losing points is meant to hurt, and Investigators are frequently distracted, their senses unreliable. To truly evoke that feel, the Keeper never reveals Difficulty Numbers.

In the Pulp mode, *Trail of Cthulhu* Investigators are hardened adventurers, instinctively aware of their limitations and of the kinds of obstacles they face. Keepers in this mode may choose to reveal Difficulties, especially for conventional obstacles like walls, Tong members, and guard dogs. Difficulty numbers for Sense Trouble (see p. 47) are never revealed.

The test represents the Investigator's best chance to succeed. Once you fail, you've shot your bolt and cannot retry unless you take some other supporting action that would credibly increase your odds of success. If allowed to do this, you must spend more pool points than you did on the previous attempt. If you can't afford it, you can't retry.

Martin has just failed his Mechanical Repair test to repair a broken pump in the sinking ship he and the other investigators are trapped in. Josh spent 2 points from Martin's Mechanical Repair pool on this attempt. The Keeper decides he'll have one more shot at it before the ship capsizes. Now he must spend at least 3 Mechanical Repair points. Fortunately he has 4 points left in his pool. The Difficulty Number of the repair attempt is 5. Josh rolls a 6, adding 3 points to get a final result of 9. The pump kicks back in, just in time to reverse the ship's sinking.

Piggybacking

When a group of Investigators act in concert to perform a task together, they designate one to take the lead. That character makes a simple test, spending any number of his own pool points toward the task, as usual. All other characters pay 1 point from their relevant pools in order to gain the benefits of the leader's action. These points are not added to the leader's die result. For every character who is unable to pay this piggybacking cost, either because he lacks pool points or does not have the ability at all, the Difficulty Number of the attempt increases by 2.

Boothroyd, Martin, Letitia, and Professor Swinburne attempt to sneak into the office of the cult gallery that Boothroyd and Letitia spotted earlier, in order to find out more about the 'Vernets' Letitia saw. Martin, with a Stealth of 8, takes the lead. Boothroyd, Letitia, and the Professor have 4, 0, and 2 points in their Stealth pools, respectively. Boothroyd and the Professor pay 1 point apiece; their pools go down to 3 and 1. Because Letitia has no points to spend, the Difficulty Number of the sneak increases from 4 to 6. (If the group left her behind, it would be easier to sneak in, but she's the artist.) Martin spends 3 points on

the attempt, but his player rolls a 1. This would have overcome the Difficulty if it weren't for Letitia's presence. Clearly, Letitia has knocked over a vase, making an ear-splitting crash and leaving an unmistakable trace of the Investigators' entry.

In most instances a group cannot logically act in concert. Only one character can drive a car at one time. Two characters with Preparedness check their individual kits in sequence, rather than checking a single kit at the same time.

Cooperation

When two Investigators cooperate toward a single goal, they agree which of them is undertaking the task directly, and which is assisting. The leader may spend any number of points from her pool, adding them to the die roll. The assistant may pay any number of points from his pool. All but one of these is applied to the die roll.

Martin and Letitia are trying to repair a rusted-out roadster so they can escape from the South Side junkyard before the Outfit shows up to kill them. Martin has 4 points left in his Mechanical Repair pool. Letitia has 3 points. They decide that Martin is the main mechanic, and Letitia his assistant. Both choose to spend all of their remaining points on the attempt. Martin adds 3 points to the die roll. Letitia also spends 3 points, but adds only 2 to the die roll. Martin's player rolls a 2, for a result of 7. This beats the Difficulty Number of 6, allowing the two of them to roar down the alley to safety as Thompson rounds spang and spatter off the piles of junked cars behind them.

Contests, Chases and Combat

"It is uncommon to fire all six shots of a revolver with great suddenness when one would probably be sufficient, but many things in the life of Herbert West were uncommon."

— "Herbert West – Reanimator"

Contests occur when two characters, often an Investigator and a non-player character controlled by the Keeper, actively attempt to thwart one another. Although contests can resolve various physical match-ups, in a horror game the most common contest is the chase, in which the Investigators run away from slavering entities intent on ripping them limb from limb.

In a contest, each participant acts in turn. The first to fail a roll of the contested ability loses. The Keeper decides who acts first. In a chase, the character who bolts from the scene acts first. Where the contestants seem to be acting at the same time, the one with the lowest rating in the relevant ability acts first. In the event of a tie, NPCs act before Investigators. In the event of a tie between Investigators, the player who arrived last for the current session goes first in the contest.

The first contestant to act makes a test of the ability in question. If he fails, he loses the contest. If he succeeds, the second then makes a test. This continues until one contestant loses, at which point the other one wins.

Typically each contestant attempts to beat a Difficulty Number of 4.

Martin flees through the darkened streets of Arkham from a dagger-wielding cultist. His current Athletics pool is 6; the cultist's is 7. (Being an all-around tough guy, Martin put points into Athletics instead of Fleeing.) As the fleeing character initiating the chase sequence, he's the first character to act. His player rolls against a Difficulty of 4, spending 1 point. He rolls a 4, and Martin manages to scramble down Fish Alley by the docks.

The cultist spends 1 point as well, the Keeper rolling a 3. He leaps through the rotting wooden railings and comes up waving his dagger and foaming at the mouth.

Martin spends another point, taking his Athletics to 4. His player rolls a 2, which adds to 3, not enough to get away.

Investigative Contests

It is possible to conceive of situations that can best be modeled by contests of Investigative **abilities:** contests of Bargain to buy an enchanted dagger in the bazaar three minutes before the eclipse reaches totality, of Credit Rating at a rare book auction, of Assess Honesty at a chess match or poker game, and so forth. More outré examples might include contests of Architecture to escape a sentient haunted house, or Outdoorsman if trying to solve a Hedge Maze of Shub-Niggurath.

This is such a tempting idea that it threatens to vitiate the entire point of Investigative abilities, which is that they always work. Thus, such a contest should only happen if it is as central and dramatic a conflict as a fight scene would be.

If it's just a color scene, or a means of dropping a clue, don't bother with a contest: just let the Investigator use his ability, win, and look good. If you must have a contest as the centerpiece of a scene, the opponent should have a pool no more than 1 point higher (for dangerous or clearly superior opponents) than the Investigator. In any event, defeat in the contest should not prevent the plot moving forwards, but have another negative consequence., for example, an important NPC is unimpressed, your enemies are warned or you have to take a more dangerous route to the next scene.

Don't Mention The Lizards

It may come to pass that an NPC wants to get information out of an Investigator. This isn't really part of the investigative RPG genre (or of Lovecraft's fiction), but it is a common occurrence in 1930s popular literature, including pulp and detective stories.

Outside a formal context, Investigators should be allowed to use Assess Honesty or otherwise detect someone casually pumping them, studying their body language, etc. If they notice, let the players decide whether (and what) to spill. Spends can suggest fruitful lies or half-truths, or help determine what will make the problem go away.

If the attempt is obvious or official, work it as an Interpersonal or other ability use for the Investigator: At an academic conference, the Investigators can use Reassurance or Archaeology to evade questions about mysterious ruins; at the police station, use Cop Talk to brush off any questions or Law to get released without interrogation.

If a lengthy confrontation is unavoidable — say, if the Investigators are being questioned in a Gestapo basement — then it's not a contest any more, it's a plot device. Do what you must to get the story going rather than reveling in the Investigators' helplessness – perhaps the other Investigators can break in and rescue the prisoner before he spills all they know about the Serpent-Folk.

Martin has backed himself onto a pier, caught with the oily Miskatonic River at his back. The cultist advances on him. Now Martin has no choice but to stand and fight.

Where the odds of success are skewed in favor of one contestant, the Keeper may assign different Difficulties to each. A contestant with a significant advantage gets a lower Difficulty Number. One facing a major handicap faces a higher Difficulty Number. When in doubt, the Keeper assigns the lower number to the advantaged participant.

Running through a rain-filled sewer, Martin finds it harder to move quickly than does the aquatic Deep One pursuing him. In this case he might face a Difficulty Number of 4, while the hellish frog-thing gets the lower Difficulty of 3.

Throughout the contest, Keeper and players should collaborate to add flavor to each result, explaining what each side did to remain in the contest. That way, instead of dropping out of the narration to engage in an arithmetical recitation, you keep the fictional world verbally alive.

Fighting

Fights are slightly more complicated contests involving any of the following abilities:

- *Scuffling vs Scuffling, Scuffling vs Weapons, or Weapons vs Weapons: the characters are fighting in close quarters.*

Fighting Without Abilities

A character with no points in Firearms is not allergic to guns. The most neurasthenic and molly-coddled aesthete is able to pick up a revolver and empty it in the general direction of the foe. Likewise, a character with no Weapons ability is not going to just ignore the fire axe sitting on the wall when the ghouls come up through the floorboards. Even a mere slip of a respectable girl with no Scuffling score will try to kick or even bite her vulgar assailants.

However, such characters will use their weapons ineffectively and hesitantly. Using a weapon (including fists or feet) without ability has the following drawbacks:

- You automatically do an additional -2 damage. (Keepers may suspend this penalty for maniacs, who always seem to do exceptional damage with improvised weaponry.)
- You must declare your action at the beginning of each round and cannot change it if the tactical situation alters.
- You automatically go last in each round.
- If you are using a firearm, a roll of 1 means you have accidentally shot yourself or one of your allies, as selected (or rolled randomly) by the Keeper. Do damage as normal (including your automatic -2 penalty).

- *Firearms vs Firearms: the characters are apart from one another and trying to hit each other with guns.*

The aggressor is the first combatant to move against the other. When the status of aggressor and defender are unclear, the combatants compare their current pool numbers in the abilities they're using in the fight. The character with the highest number chooses whether to act as aggressor or defender. (Unlike an ordinary contest, in a fight it is often advantageous to strike first.)

A contest proceeds between the two abilities. When combatants using the Scuffling, Weapons, or Firearms abilities roll well, they get the opportunity to deal damage to their opponents.

Hit Thresholds: Each Investigator has a Hit Threshold of either 3 (the standard value) or 4 (if the Investigator's Athletics rating is 8 or more.) The Hit Threshold is the Difficulty Number the Investigator's opponent must match or beat in order to harm him. Less competent NPCs may have lower Hit Thresholds, but cult guards, Gestapo agents, and similar opponents will generally parallel Investigator levels.

Creatures may have Hit Thresholds of 4 or higher, regardless of their Athletics ratings. Extremely large creatures will usually have a Hit Threshold 1 lower than roughly man-sized beings of the same sort.

In the Pulp mode, faceless mook opponents such as Nazi soldiers or Haitian cultists will have Hit Thresholds of 2 or 3. Mythos creatures – even in hordes – will have their normal values.

Dealing Damage: When you roll equal to or over your opponent's Hit Threshold, you may deal damage to him. To do so, you make a damage roll, rolling a die which is then modified according to the relative lethality of your weapon, as per the following table:

Weapon Type	Damage Modifier
Fist, kick	-2
Small improvised weapon, blackjack, bullwhip, nightstick, knife	-1
Big improvised weapon, machete, heavy club, fireplace poker, light firearm	0
Sword, heavy firearm	+1

Supernatural creatures often exhibit alarmingly high damage modifiers.

For firearms, add an additional +2 when fired at point-blank range. All shotguns are considered heavy firearms at point-blank range. At point-blank or close range, add an additional +1 to damage if you fire both barrels of a double-barreled shotgun simultaneously. Thus, a 20-gauge double-barreled shotgun (normally a light firearm doing +0 damage), fired with both barrels at point-blank range, carries a total modifier of +4, as would a 12-gauge double-barreled shotgun (already a heavy firearm doing +1 damage).

A more detailed firearms table appears on p. 186.

Blackjacks

Blackjacks, brass knuckles, coshes, saps, rolls of quarters or shillings tucked up in the fist, and similar sorts of life-preserving gear do -1 damage, rather than -2 as per a normal fist attack. Using them is a test of Scuffling, not Weapons. In a Scuffling vs Scuffling contest, the blackjack user goes last.

The final damage result is then subtracted from your opponent's Health pool. Unlike other contests, participants do not lose when they fail their test rolls. Instead, they're forced out of the fight when they lose consciousness or become seriously wounded (see p. 63). Any combatants currently engaged with him in a close-quarters fight can then deal another instance of damage to him.

Free-For-All Combat

Combat becomes more chaotic when two groups of combatants fight, or a group gangs up against a single opponent. The Keeper abandons the aggressor/defender model. Instead, the Keeper determines an order of action, ranking all participants in the combat according to their present pool values in the fighting skills they'll be starting the fight with: Scuffling, Weapons, or Firearms. Ties are broken in favor of characters with higher ratings in those skills. If combatants are still tied, Investigators win out over creatures and enemies, and early-arriving players win over late-arriving players.

The time it takes to go through the ranking order once, with each

Horribly, Realistically, Lethal Firearms

You would be amazed, or perhaps you wouldn't, at the number of playtesters who complained that a single gunshot would not reliably kill their character. Firearms are chancy things, even in expert hands – there is a fully attested report of a gunfight involving three guns and thirty shots fired, that occurred *entirely inside a police car*, in which nobody was seriously injured. Every cop in the world has a story about the guy who "just wouldn't stay shot." There is even an argument that until a character gets below 0 Health points, Health points have the same abstract function as other pools. But that said, we plead guilty to making gunfights sort of survivable in the name of continuing drama.

After all, a .38 pistol will do only 4 points per shot on average, meaning it will take two shots to knock a Health 6 target down to Hurt. Now, if that's two point-blank shots (6 points apiece), those two bullets will very likely knock that Health 6 storm trooper down to Seriously Wounded and force a Consciousness roll. It would take two maxed-out (rolling a 6 on each die) point-blank shots, 18 points total, to kill him.

So, if you want a more realistic damage result from firearms, with a possible one-shot kill, the simplest way to do it is to treat all Hurt results to humans from firearms as Seriously Wounded results. Where bruising or even hacking damage might be "shaken off," any gunshot that drops your Health pool to 0 or below does an additional +6 points of damage. A single point-blank shot from a heavy firearm can now potentially kill your Investigator instantly, assuming her Health pool is 3 or less. Even if her Health pool is 9 or less, it could potentially force her to lose consciousness, which is probably just as bad, or even worse in some circumstances.

Monsters, especially Mythos monsters, don't suffer any such extra damage from gunshots unless the Keeper explicitly rules that they do.

Making NPCs drop dead on a bullet wound is easy – just give them 0 or less Health points. This isn't necessarily a measure of their actual fortitude, it's more likely to have narrative significance. For example, an NPC the PCs are talking to might be shot dead by a single bullet before revealing important information.

combatant taking an action, is called a **round**. When one round ends, another begins. (For speed of play, however, ranking order stays where it was at the beginning of the combat even if pool values have changed.) When called upon to act, each combatant may strike at any opponent within range of his weapons. Some supernatural creatures may strike more than once per round. They make each attack in succession, and may divide them up between opponents within range, or concentrate all of them on a single enemy.

Once the fight has begun, if a combatant wishes to do something else besides fight – run away, jump up on the sideboard for a tactical advantage, throw a grenade – they move immediately to the last position in the ranking order as they turn to expose their vulnerable back to the foe, shake off the adrenaline, fumble for the pin, or whatever.

Creatures may choose to use their actions to deal additional damage to downed or helpless opponents rather than engage active opponents. They automatically deal once instance of damage per action. Only the most crazed and bestial human enemies engage in this behavior.

Combatants who join an affray in progress come last in order of precedence. If more than two combatants join during the same round, the Keeper determines their relative precedence using the rules above.

The fight continues until one side capitulates or flees, or all of its members are unconscious or otherwise unable to continue.

Armor

Armor may reduce the damage from certain weapon types. If you're wearing a form of armor effective against the weapon being used against you, you subtract a number of points from each instance of damage dealt to you before applying it to your Health pool.

In the 1930s, there is essentially no personal body armor available besides Great War surplus helmets. A "tin hat" reduces damage from bullets and cutting or slashing weapons by 2 points, and from clubs or blunt trauma by 1 point. It is only effective against head shots, of course.

At the Keeper's discretion, tough leather jackets, thick raccoon coats, or other heavy outer garments might reduce damage from small knives, improvised weapons, fists, or clubs by 1 point.

Physical Injury and Death

Unlike most abilities, your Health pool can drop below 0.

When it does this, you must make a Consciousness Roll. Roll a die with the absolute value of your current Health pool as your Difficulty. You may deliberately strain yourself to remain conscious, voluntarily reducing your Health pool by an amount of your choice. (You may not voluntarily reduce your Health pool below -11.) For each point you reduce it, add 1 to your die result. The Difficulty of the Consciousness roll is based on your Health pool before you make this reduction.

Father Micah is being chased by Y'golonac cultists through what he initially thought was a convent. A cultist hits him with an antique spiked morning-star, dropping his Health pool to -2. He really wants to get away from them, lest they force him to celebrate their vile fleshly rituals. Thus he must remain conscious. The absolute value of -2 is 2, so this is the Difficulty of his Consciousness roll. He chooses to expend another 2 Health points he doesn't have, pushing himself onward toward the ornately - and obscenely — carven doors. That gives him a bonus of 2 to his roll. He rolls a 6, for a final result of 8. Father Micah gets away, but now his Health pool is down to -4.

If your pool is anywhere from 0 to –5, you are hurt, but have suffered no permanent injury beyond a few superficial cuts and bruises. However, the pain of your injuries makes it impossible to spend points on Investigative abilities, and increases the Difficulty Numbers of all tests and contests, including opponents' Hit Thresholds, by 1.

First Aid: A character with the First Aid ability can improve your condition by spending First Aid points. For every First Aid point spent, you regain 2 Health points — unless you are healing yourself, in which case you gain only 1 Health point for every First Aid point spent.

A character giving First Aid must be in a position to devote all of his attention to directly tending to your wounds.

First Aid can only refill your pool to where you were before the scene in which you received this latest injury. For example, if you get shot and then someone punches you during the same fight, you can repair both. If you get shot, run away, get into another fight, and then somebody punches you, you can heal the punch.

First Aid can only ever bring you back to one third of your maximum Health points. All other increases must be gained using the Refreshing Health rules (see p. 81). This option makes hurt Investigators very fragile.

If your pool is between –6 and –11, you have been seriously wounded. You must make a Consciousness roll. Whether or not you maintain consciousness, you are no longer able to fight. Until you receive first aid, you will lose an additional Health point every half hour.

First Aid and serious wounds: A character with the First Aid ability can stabilize your condition by spending 2 First Aid points. However, he can't restore your Health points.

Even after you receive first aid, you must convalesce in a hospital or similar setting for a period of days. Your period of forced inactivity is a number of days equal to the positive value of your lowest Health pool score. (So if you were reduced to -8 Health, you are hospitalized for 8 days.) On the day of your discharge, your Health pool increases to half its maximum value. On the next day, it refreshes fully.

When your pool dips to –12 or below, you are dead. Time to activate your replacement Investigator.

Health Loss For NPCs

In a Purist game, the Investigators are no different from anyone else. All humans lose Health mechanically in the same way.

In the Pulp mode, the Investigators are a cut above the rest of the herd. Normal people, both mooks and bystanders, simply (or dramatically, or messily) die when their Health is reduced below 0. Using this rule does make combats much faster, so even Purist Keepers may want to sneak it into battles against cultists, etc. The Keeper may, if she thinks it dramatically appropriate, decide that certain NPCs use the Investigators' Health loss rules.

Martin is stabbed by a madwoman with a pair of scissors. The Keeper rolls a 3 for the maniac's damage, subtracting 1 point for a small, improvised weapon, for a total damage of 2. Martin's leather duster reduces it by 1 further point. His Health pool decreases from 6 to 5.

Creatures often have high armor ratings. They may possess hard, bony hides or monstrous anatomies that can take greater punishment than ordinary organisms. Many creatures of the Mythos are not fully present in our physical universe, and are thus unaffected by physical weapons.

Non-Lethal Damage

Players may always announce that their Investigators are using their Scuffling attacks to do non-lethal damage: choke-holds, arm-locks, body blows, and the like. Such attacks never lower a target's Health pool below -11, but merely force yet another Consciousness roll if successful. A tolerant Keeper will allow similar declarations for non-bladed Weapons attacks.

Bringing a knife, or worse, a gun into a fight is a declaration of willingness to kill. There is no such thing as a non-lethal Firearms attack. Players who don't want their Investigators to kill people shouldn't let their Investigators use lethal weapons on human opponents.

Cover

In a typical gunfight, combatants seek cover, hiding behind walls, furniture or other barriers, exposing themselves only for the few seconds it takes them to pop up and fire a round at their targets. The *Trail of Cthulhu* rules recognize three cover conditions:

Exposed: No barrier stands between you and the combatant firing at you. Your Hit Threshold decreases by 1.

Partial Cover: This is the normal condition in a gunfight. About half of your body is exposed to fire. Your Hit Threshold remains unchanged. This is also the condition if you have full cover, but only behind thin or flimsy materials like leaves, drywall, or

Bullet-Resistant Clothing

All right, you got us. Mobsters in the Chicago and New York of the 1930s did, in fact, wear heavy "bullet-proof vests" made of thick layers of cotton padding and canvas or denim. Some even tried a layer of rivets or metal discs, with mixed results. Such vests could stop the penetration of a .32, or even (from a distance) a .38 slug, leading some American law enforcement agencies and personnel to adopt the .357 Magnum round, beginning in 1934. They are not particularly well-known outside criminal and law-enforcement circles, and characters without Streetwise should not have access to them, nor should any non-American character.

All that said, it's not entirely ridiculous for such things to show up, especially in a Pulp-idiom game set in gangland Chicago or New York. A "gangster vest" will reduce bullet or club damage by 2 points, although wearing it reduces your Athletics pool by 1. It is ineffective against stabbing or cutting attacks.

Needless to say, wandering the streets in gangster garb is a great way to get arrested on "suspicion of mopery" in a pre-Miranda society. Most Investigators are engaged in activities that do not easily withstand police scrutiny at the best of times.

If Keepers are really concerned that Investigators can't wade through gunfire, a simpler solution is just to rule that all gunshots that hit Investigators (especially shots fired by faceless mooks) do 1 point less damage.

A still better solution is to not write gun-toting opponents into the scenario in the first place, but that takes us back into Purist territory.

the dry-rotted planks in some backwoods cannibal shack.

Full Cover: Except when you pop up to fire a round, the barrier completely protects you from incoming fire. Your Hit Threshold increases by 1.

Rate of Fire

Although in Purist games, Investigators will seldom see or use fully automatic weapons, this is the era of the Thompson submachine gun, the Schmeisser, and other excellent room-clearing devices. Firing such a weapon on full auto gives you 2 extra points in your Firearms pool, assuming you have one. (If the Keeper has been so lax as to allow you a Tommy-gun with the whole 50- or 100-round drum, instead of the more usual military 20- or 30-round box, you have 3 extra points in your Firearms pool.) After expending a full-auto burst and the extra Firearms pool points associated with it, machine-gunners must stop combat for one round to reload. (Or start using the gun as a club, we presume.) Reloading does not refresh those full auto Firearms pool points, which represent primarily the "shock and awe" of initially unleashing a hose of lead upon the foe. As the Great War demonstrated, foes can get used to anything.

On a roll of 1 with a submachine gun on full auto, even if you hit, your gun jams, and you must stop combat until you succeed at a

One Gun, Two Combatants

If you are at the mercy of an opponent with gun well in hand and ready to fire, he can empty his entire clip or chamber at you before you get to him, or get yourself out of range. This situation occurs for example, if he holds you at gunpoint or charge him from more than five feet away with no cover. The Difficulty is 1 (an automatic hit), 2 if your Athletics rating is 8 or more and you are moving. He rolls one instance of damage, which is then tripled. Yes, we said tripled. And, yes, the tripling occurs after weapon modifiers are taken into account. This is why few unarmed people attack a gun-wielding opponent when he has the drop on them.

If your opponent has a pistol but it is not well in hand and ready to fire, you may attempt to jump him and wrestle it from his grip. If he has a pistol well in hand but is unaware of your presence, you may also be able to jump him, at theKeeper's discretion. The characters engage in a Scuffling contest to see which of them gets control of the gun and fires it. The winner makes a damage roll against the loser, using the pistol's Damage Modifier, including the +2 for point blank range.

If you jump an opponent with an unready rifle, a Scuffling combat breaks out, with the opponent using the rifle as a heavy club.

Mechanical Repair test (most likely under gunfire) at Difficulty 4. You cannot fire during the same round in which you attempt this test.

The *Trail of Cthulhu* rules do not otherwise distinguish between pump-action, bolt-action, semi-automatics, revolvers, and other firearm mechanisms.

A person firing a submachine gun on full auto can attempt to riddle more than one target with bullets in a single round. All targets must be at point-blank or close range (see below),and you need to make a Firearms roll for each one. For each target after the first, all your opponents' Hit Thresholds increase by 1. For example, if you were targeting three opponents, their Hit Thresholds.would all increase by 2. You cannot target the same individual twice in a round.

Ammo Capacity

In the Purist mode, firearms are discouraged. The Keeper may either keep track of ammunition use to maintain tension ("three bullets left, and six ghouls") or rule that any Firearms roll (not test result) of 1 means the gun is empty ("the hammer clicks on an empty chamber") and must be reloaded. (A roll of 1, therefore, is an automatic miss.) After all, reticent antiquarians rarely practice proper aim control or shooting discipline.

In the Pulp mode, Investigators need to reload only when dramatically appropriate, or after "giving it both barrels." (See the shotgun types on p. 61 for specifics.) Otherwise, they're assumed to be able to refill the cylinders of their revolvers or jam clips into their automatic weapons between shots.

When reloading is an issue, Keepers may request a Firearms test (Difficulty 3) to quickly reload. Characters who fail may not use their Firearms ability to attack during the current round.

> *Separated from his teammates, a wounded Martin crawls into a ruined lamasery to hole up. Unfortunately for him, the building is inhabited by a tribe of degraded Tcho-Tchos. The Keeper decides that limited resources will increase the sequence's sense of terror, and declares that Martin has only four shots left in his trusty Colt .45, and only one extra ammo clip in his pocket. She plans to have the Tcho-Tchos gang up on him, forcing him to roll Firearms to successfully reload as they rush him.*

Range

A horror game should not be about tactical positioning or counting hexes on a map; it should be about adrenaline, cordite, and spattering blood. To encourage such healthy abstraction, the *Trail of Cthulhu* rules acknowledge only four ranges:

Point-Blank: You are literally face-to-face (or face-to-back-of-head) with your opponent, within easy arm's reach. All brawls and scuffles occur at this range. At this range, all firearms do an additional +2 points of damage, and all shotguns are considered heavy firearms, with a base damage modifier of +1.

Close: You are in the same room with your opponent, or within no more than 10 yards or so. A swordfight or a karate match might happen at this range, but no farther. This is as far as you can throw an object directly at a target unless the object is specifically designed for throwing (a grenade, a javelin).

Near: You can see your opponent distinctly, perhaps across a warehouse or across the street, no more than 30 or 40 yards away. At this range, all shotguns are considered light firearms, and do no extra damage, even if both barrels are fired simultaneously. This is the farthest range at which you can hit a target with a pistol or shotgun, unless you are using

The Keeper's First Combat

GUMSHOE combat is designed to be fast and furious. However, it is dependent on the relative abilities of the two sides, and also their point spending choices. One playtest group found combat to be a little slow; another far too deadly. We recommend that in your first game you run at least one combat where, regardless of who wins, the end result is not deadly for the PCs. Pub brawls, attacks by wild beasts or fencing duels are good examples.

This will give the Keeper a good idea of the relative values to set for Health, Armor, Hit Threshold and Damage for his NPCs, how best to make point spends and be properly prepared for future combats which are in earnest.

Explosive Device Table

Explosion	Point-Blank	Close	Near	Long
Molotov cocktail*	+1	0	X	X
Pipe bomb	+2	+1	-1	X
Stick of dynamite	+3	+2	-2	X
Bundle of dynamite	+7	+4	-1	X
Rifle- or hand-grenade	+3	+1	-2	X
Land mine	+8	+3	-1	X
Propane tank (or exploding car, in Pulp)*	+4	+2	0	-2
Firedamp, coal-dust, or mill-flour	+6	+4	+1	-1
Gas main*	+9	+5	0	X
Mortar shell, rocket attack*	+6	+3	0	X
Artillery strike, bomber attack*	+17	+8	+1	-2

the optional Pulp rule on p. 42. This is as far as you can throw any object, either in a general direction (like a stick of dynamite) or at a specific target (like a baseball).

Long: Your opponent is within 100 yards. Opponents farther away cannot be reliably targeted at all, and are out of the combat. This is the farthest range at which you can hit a target with a rifle, unless you are using the optional Pulp rule on p. 42.

Explosives and Explosions

The life of the intrepid Investigator would be brief indeed without the capacity to dynamite abandoned buildings, toss Mills bombs into sewers, and so forth.

Setting an explosive charge or booby-trap merely requires using Explosives; assuming the victim is on the spot when the charge is triggered, the explosion automatically goes off at point-blank range. If Investigators are the targets, they should be allowed a Sense Trouble test (Difficulty 4 or better, depending on the skill of the bomber) to dive (or pull their dimmer colleagues) away to close range.

Throwing a grenade is an Athletics test with the Difficulty set by range: 2 for point-blank targets, 3 for close targets, 5 for near targets. If you are attempting to hurl a grenade at a specific spot (such as the intake valve of a Nazi U-boat), the Difficulty number increases by 1 at point-blank or close targets, and by 2 for near range targets.

All Difficulties are +1 for throwing non-balanced explosives such as Molotov cocktails (technically "Franco's bottle-bombs" in this era) or sticks or bundles of dynamite.

Rifle-grenades (revived during the Great War) are military equipment, not available to civilian Investigators. Using a rifle-grenade is a Firearms test as normal. Firing mortars, artillery, and so forth is a Mechanical Repair test.

The chart above indicates the additional damage done by various sorts of explosions, again demarcated by range (X indicates no effect at that range) from ground zero.

Explosives or explosions marked with an asterisk (*) may also

Damage to Vehicles

An Investigator driving a vehicle through a firefight may spend 1 Driving point per round (or less often if the Keeper believes the vehicle is not a primary target of gunfire) to avoid serious damage to the tires, engine block, or fuel tank, although windows and rag tops are destined to be shot to pieces regardless. He may not use any other abilities while evading bullets. The Keeper may also reveal damage after the immediate crisis is ended: "Looks like one of those slugs back there clipped your fuel line. You've got about ten more minutes before you're running on empty."

Targeting the tires, fuel tank, or engine block of an opponent's moving vehicle increases the Hit Threshold by 2. Any damage whatsoever knocks out a tire. Fuel tanks have the equivalent of 2 points of armor against bullets; engine blocks have the equivalent of 4 points of armor against bullets.

Targeting passengers or drivers uses the standard cover rules from p. 64.

Only in the very pulpiest games does firing a bullet into a speeding car's fuel tank cause it to explode; it instead begins leaving a trail of combustible gasoline behind it.

start fires. If the Investigator who set or uses the device has an Explosives skill, he can decide if he used incendiaries, and if so, if the fire spreads and where. Natural or villainous explosions should start fires if the Keeper considers a fire to be dramatically interesting, which is to say virtually always.

Other Dangers

In the spirit of *Trail of Cthulhu*, most of these environmental dangers are assessed primarily in narrative, rather than starkly biological, terms.

Acid: Once the acid is applied (usually with a monster's Scuffling roll, but an Investigator might hurl a carboy of the stuff in extremis), it does continuous damage each round until removed or counteracted with Chemistry or Medicine. (First Aid does not prepare you for acid casualties.) Roll a damage die for the first application and use that result for all future damage increments. Weak acids take a -2 modifier (merely smoldering away at clothing or vital possessions, if less than 1 point of damage results); strong acids take a 0 modifier; very strong acids (sulfuric acid, most monster venoms) take a +1 modifier. At the Keeper's discretion, an acid attack might merely blind an Investigator until healed, making combat (among other things) impossible.

Temperature Extremes: In intense heat or cold, it can be difficult to move or think. Treat Investigators suffering from extreme heat or cold (on the plains of Leng without parkas, for example) as **hurt.**

Drowning and Suffocation: If an Investigator has advance warning before being immersed in water or an unbreathable atmosphere, he can hold his breath. An Investigator holding his breath underwater may make an Athletics test each round to avoid inhaling water, in addition to anything else he may be doing (such as trying frantically to escape from a creature's grasp). The difficulty of this test begins at 3 and increases by 1 with every passing round. As soon as the Investigator fails the test, he has inhaled water and begins to drown.

Drowning Investigators automatically lose 1d6+1 points of Health per round, but these lost points can be restored if the victim is rescued and resuscitated before she dies.

Falling: A fall does damage equal to the Difficulty Factor of the wall, cliff, etc that you fell off of, adding +2 for falls onto spikes, concrete, or jagged rocks. Try to avoid writing adventures in which one missed Athletics roll spells instant death – for player Investigators, anyhow. NPCs can fall into bottomless crevasses or off the sides of mountains all you wish.

Fire: A hand-held torch is an improvised weapon, doing normal damage with a -1 damage modifier. Falling into a large bonfire does normal damage with a 0 damage modifier; running into a burning room does normal damage with a +1 damage modifier.

If an Investigator is actually set on fire, roll normal damage with a 0 damage modifier each round automatically until he puts it out somehow. (Use Athletics to drop and roll, or just jump into a

convenient water-filled basement. Mind the Deep Ones!)

Investigators in a burning building run the risk of smoke asphyxiation, which uses the drowning and suffocation rules above.

Poison: The range of poisons is a vast and glorious universe of possibilities for the Keeper, and far too complex to enumerate here.

She should decide how long the poison takes to onset, its symptoms (usually involving penalties to Health or **hurt** effects, but paralysis, convulsions, and vomiting are also common), and whether or not it is lethal to its victim. Narratively speaking, like falls into bottomless pits, instantaneous death from the bite of a rare South African fly should be reserved for NPCs. Investigators should have a fighting chance to get somewhere that a Pharmacy or Medicine spend can save them, unless the narrative point of the poison is its implacable nature – the venom of Yig, for example.

Note that basic poison control *is* an aspect of First Aid: if the poison can be purged or (in Pulp games) sucked from the wound, First Aid (or Outdoorsman, for snake bites) can cure it.

Stability, Sanity, and Madness

As noted in the abilities lists, Stability and Sanity refer to two different, but related, qualities. Stability is mental and emotional resistance to trauma of any kind, natural, human, or supernatural. Think of it as your mental and emotional Health pool. Your Stability pool is quite likely to dwindle rapidly over the course of a single adventure, but it is also likely to completely refresh between scenarios. It is perhaps best understood as a short-term measure of your current mental health.

Sanity is the ability to believe in, fear for, or care about any aspect of the world or humanity as we know it: religion, science, family, natural beauty, human dignity, even "normal" immorality. The horrible truth of the Mythos is that Sanity measures your ability to believe a comforting lie – but a lie necessary in order to live as a human being rather than a soulless tool or plaything of the Great Old Ones. Your Sanity will probably erode slowly over the course of many adventures. Unless you see a Great Old One, lose a Pillar of Sanity, or suffer a Big Reveal (see p. 76), you will probably lose only 1 or 2 points from your Sanity pool in any given adventure. You may lose none at all! But Sanity is slow to return; in Purist games, it never comes back at all. It is perhaps best understood as a long-term measure of how close you are to fully realizing the bleak and awful reality of the cosmos.

In short, your Stability pool measures how close you are to snapping today; your Sanity pool measures how close you are to seeing the Truth forever.

Losing Stability

Even non-supernatural effects often prove emotionally destabilizing. Every violent encounter puts you at risk for Shell Shock (see p. 77). Isolation or constant stress – and, of course, encountering supernatural monstrosities, or worse yet, perceiving the truths of the Cthulhu Mythos – can lead to a complete psychotic break and permanent mental illness.

When an incident challenges your grip on yourself, make a Stability test against a Difficulty Number of 4. As with any other test of a General ability, you are always permitted to spend Stability points to provide a bonus to your roll. However, it's never a good bet to spend more points than you stand to lose if you fail. You *can* "spend yourself negative," if you think you absolutely *have* to cast that spell, although you can *not* voluntarily reduce your Stability pool below -11.

If you fail, you lose a number of points from your Stability pool, in addition to any points spent on the test itself. The severity of the loss depends on the situation.

Mythos shocks are qualitatively different from normal traumas. They always add at least +1 to the Difficulty Number of the Stability test. Most Mythos entities also impose higher than normal Stability losses, even for supernatural creatures, as indicated in their description.

Keepers should feel free to assess Stability Losses for other

Why Two Abilities?

GUMSHOE gets by just fine with Stability as a catch-all, while *Call of Cthulhu* uses Sanity to measure both Mythos-ignorance and mental health. Why separate the two? Fundamentally, it seems necessary to do it in order to model as many of Lovecraft's characters and stories as possible. The Sanity rules in *Call of Cthulhu* superbly model a Lovecraft character like Francis Thurston in *The Call of Cthulhu*, who skirts the edge of madness merely after reading a few news clippings and diaries, or Professor Nathaniel Peaslee in *The Shadow Out of Time*, who goes mad after discovering that his nightmares are actually memories and seeing his own handwriting in the ancient Yithian city of Pnakotus. It likewise suitably models characters driven mad by the traumatic shock of encountering actual Mythos entities, such as Robert Blake in *The Haunter of the Dark* or the narrator of *Dagon*.

But Lovecraft's fiction also features folks like Dr Armitage in *The Dunwich Horror*, who has read the *Necronomicon* at least twice and has a terrifying level of Cthulhu Mythos knowledge, but who remains outwardly completely stable and respectable even in the face of a Spawn of Yog-Sothoth. He has a very high Stability, even if his Sanity – his ability to believe in the pious legends of faith and science — is perilously low.

A middle case is young Danforth from *At the Mountains of Madness*, who "comes unstrung" upon seeing an onrushing shoggoth and retains a morbid fear of subways henceforth. But he is able to pull himself together to fly the plane out of Antarctica, and his "final breakdown" only comes after he reads the entire *Necronomicon* and makes horrible sense of his last sight of Kadath.

The narrator of that novel, Dyer, also saw the shoggoth (though not the final glance), and is at least familiar with some of the Cthulhu Mythos, but remains stable enough to keep his academic post. However, Dyer apparently believes that even knowledge of the Elder Things' city is almost as dangerous as the shoggoths lurking therein.

Examples from Lovecraft's fiction can be endlessly multiplied, but we decided on this as the bottom line: Although Mythos knowledge can be dangerous to your mental health, it is only by applying it to the "piecing together of dissociated knowledge" – in game terms, by using your Cthulhu Mythos ability – that the truth begins to hurt. That said, being swarmed by an army of Deep Ones or seeing the rise of Great Cthulhu will mess you up big time, no matter how you interpret it to yourself.

incidents, using the examples provided as a benchmark. Some especially overwhelming creatures, especially Mythos monsters, may impose higher than normal Stability losses when seen from a distance, seen up close, or ripping your lungs out. In adventures, when a Stability test is called for, a Stability test with a potential loss of 4 points is described as "a 4-point Stability test."

Here's a Stability test in action:

> *Martin's current Stability is 8. While staking out a dismal warehouse on the outskirts of Tangier, he sees a jerky, grayish figure materialize out of the sand and then flow toward the mountains. Since this is a djinn created by human sorcery, and not a Mythos creature, Martin's player Josh will be trying to beat a Difficulty of 4. (If it had been a Sand-Dweller, for instance, Josh would be trying to beat a Difficulty of 5.) Confident that this mere glimpse of a creature constitutes only a minor brush with destabilizing weirdness, Josh elects to spend only 1 point to bolster his roll. Alas, he rolls a 1, for a result of 2, two lower than the Difficulty Number. Having failed, Martin suffers a Stability loss of 3. Having spent 1 point on his bonus and lost another 3 to the failure, Martin's new Stability pool value is 4.*

The Keeper should cap total Stability loss for any given incident at the highest potential single Stability loss.

> *Martin and his friend Daniel are in the North End cemetery on a cloudy afternoon looking for genealogical data on a suspected immortal wizard. Suddenly, a small pack of rat-things bursts from an open grave and attacks them. (For dramatic purposes, the Keeper chooses to call for a single*

Stability Loss Table

Incident	Stability Loss
You see a fresh corpse; you witness a killing	1
A human opponent attacks you with evident intent to do serious harm	2
You are in a car or other vehicle accident serious enough to pose a risk of injury	2
You experience a strong unnatural sensation such as intense déjà vu, "missing time", or hallucinations	2
You witness acts of torture	2
A human opponent attacks you with evident intent to kill	3
You kill someone in a fight	3
You see a particularly grisly murder or accident scene	3
You see a supernatural creature from a distance	3
You witness an obviously unnatural, but not necessarily threatening, omen or magical effect – a wall covered in horrible insects, a talking cat, or a bleeding window	3
You see hundreds of corpses; you witness a large battle	4
You see a supernatural creature up close	4
You spend a week in solitary confinement	4
You learn that a friend, loved one, or Source of Stability has been violently killed	4
You discover the corpse of a friend, loved one, or Source of Stability	5
You are attacked by a supernatural creature, or by a friend, loved one, or Source of Stability	5
You witness a clearly supernatural or impossible killing	5
You witness or experience an obviously unnatural, and threatenting, omen or magical effect – a cold hand clutches your heart, a swarm of bees pours out of your mouth	5
You kill someone in cold blood; you torture someone	5
You see a friend, loved one, or Source of Stability killed	6
You are tortured for an hour or longer	6
You discover that you have committed cannibalism	6
You are possessed by some outside force, but conscious while it operates your body unspeakably	7
You speak with someone you know well who you know to be dead	7
You are attacked by a single gigantic supernatural creature or by a horde of supernatural creatures	7
You see a friend, loved one, or Source of Stability killed in a particularly gruesome manner or in a way you are helpless to avert	8
You kill a friend, loved one, or Source of Stability	8

Stability roll for the attack, even though technically seeing the rat-things is its own shock.) Martin fails his Stability test and loses 5 points for being attacked by a supernatural creature. (If he had recognized one of the rat-things, he would have lost 6 points.) Martin blazes away with his trusty Colt .45, driving off the creatures, but not before they devour Daniel in front of his eyes, biting through his skull and slurping the insides like it was an eggshell. Martin's player, Josh, makes a second roll, with a potential Stability Loss of 8 (seeing a friend killed gruesomely), but since Martin has already lost 5 points, he will only lose 3 more if he fails this test, for a total of 8, the highest possible Stability loss from the horrific sequence of events

Experience and Stability

Difficulty Numbers for Stability tests also change depending on the Investigator's attitude toward the destabilizing event. Investigators who would logically be inured to a given event face a Difficulty of 3, while those especially susceptible face a 5. An Investigator who has had extensive training in treating injuries might, for example, face a lowered Difficulty when encountering gruesomely mutilated bodies. A soldier would get a better chance against violent attacks or the death of comrades. No character type gets a break when encountering supernatural creatures.

Roleplaying Instability

Although there is no mechanical effect to losing Stability until your pool goes below 0, many players enjoy roleplaying the shocks and edginess of a terrifying encounter. Herewith, then, a few guidelines.

1-2 point loss: You might twitch, or stutter. Your voice could rise a bit, or you could Very. Explicitly. Stay. In. Control.

3-4 point loss: You might have to stop a bit and hyperventilate. You're blinking a lot, and maybe sweating, too. If you talk, you might run away with your own words. Keep doing something comforting – rack the slide on your shotgun, hum the Miskatonic fight song, that kind of thing. That will see you through this.

5-6 point loss: This is serious. You may go into a little fugue state; déjà vu comes over you, or you get "frame drop" and miss a couple of seconds. Nothing fatal, no, you're still good. Nope. If you're talking, you might call out some encouragement to your mates! They're probably not doing near as well as you! If you've got a pre-existing condition, say a phobia or Shell Shock (see p. 77), you're hyper-aware of anything that might trigger it.

7-8 point loss: How are you not shaken yet? You've almost certainly gone into adrenaline shock; your peripheral vision is gone, and your hands and feet are cold. You may babble personal confessions ("I've always loved you, Tom") or just shout incoherent threats. If you can make Interpersonal abilities work at all, they work more through fear of what you might do next than anything else.

Truly staunch Investigators can become inured to the onslaught of some supernatural creatures such as zombies, and even some lesser Mythos menaces such as ghouls or Deep Ones. Once an Investigator has successfully passed a number of Stability tests triggered by a given kind of creature equal to the Difficulty Number it imposes, that Difficulty Number drops by -1. Even in the pulpiest game, no Mythos entity ever has a Difficulty Number lower than 2.

Two-Gun Corrigan has run across Deep Ones (who, as Mythos creatures, trigger Stability tests at a Difficulty of 5) before. After his fifth successful Stability test against Deep Ones, he has gotten their measure somewhat. His next Stability test against these slimy batrachians will be at Difficulty 4. If he passes four more Stability tests against Deep Ones without fail, he will have a mere Difficulty 3 to remain calm as they sidle and hop toward him.

Drives and Stability

If Lovecraft's characters were run by roleplayers, there would be no horror. No one would go down into the sub-basement, read incantations found in moldy tomes, piece together their dead uncle's notes, or study non-Euclidean mathematics at Miskatonic University.

Your Drive encourages you to

abandon the flinty rationality of a player controlling a game piece. They give your Investigators the same overpowering impulses that inspire Gothic horror characters – and real people — to make the dumb choices they do on a regular basis.

The Keeper will tell you when you find your Drive impelling you to irrationally heedless action. When in doubt, she'll explain exactly what you have to do to satisfy your impulse. You are never obligated to obey it. By exerting unusual force of will, you can control your behavior.

At a price.

Sometimes the Keeper will refer to your Drive in her scenario notes, as a means of moving the plot ahead and getting you into trouble. This is referred to as a **hard driver**. Whenever you resist a hard driver, you lose either 4 Stability points or one-third of your Stability pool, whichever is greater. On other occasions a situation tangential to the main storyline would logically trigger your self-destructive tendencies. This is called a **soft driver**. It costs you 2 Stability points to resist a soft risk factor. The Keeper is always allowed to invoke a hard driver, whether or not it is literally written down. In a heavily improvised scenario, the "notes" are all in her head in the first place.

In neither case do you get to roll Stability to avoid the loss. It is automatic.

But for every stick, there is a stunted, dubious carrot. When your Investigator obeys his Drive, he gains Stability, as he bolsters his own emotional or intellectual justification for action. His actions are authentic, even if they are horribly misguided. When you obey a hard driver, you refresh 2 points in your Stability pool; you refresh 1 point after obeying a soft driver. Gains never increase your pool above your Stability rating.

The Keeper is encouraged to use the Investigator Matrix to keep an eye on their Drives, and present suitable drivers for each PC.

Players may suggest ways their Investigator can obey their Drive for such rewards. The Keeper should only grant such rewards if the action immediately advances the story or, optionally, if it places the Investigator or his teammates in grave peril.

Coming Unstrung

"Sanity departed — and, ignoring everything except the animal impulse of flight, I merely struggled and plunged upward over the incline's debris as if no gulf had existed."

— "The Shadow Out of Time"

Like Health, your Stability pool can drop below 0.
If your Stability ranges from 0 to –5, you are shaken. You can still do your job, but seem distracted. You can't spend points from the pools of your Investigative abilities. Difficulty Numbers for all General abilities increase by 1.
If your Stability ranges from –6 to –11, your mind is blasted. At the Keeper's discretion, you develop a mental illness that stays with you even after your Stability pool is restored to normal. (See p. 77 below for more.) You also continue to suffer the ill effects of being shaken. The only actions you can take are panicked flight or frenzied attacks on any perceived dangers. You may also choose to do nothing colorfully: gibber incoherently, chant the names of subway stations, freeze into catatonia, etc. Furthermore, you permanently lose 1 point from your Stability *rating*. The only way to get it back is to purchase it again with build points.
When your Stability reaches –12 or less, you are incurably insane. You may commit one last crazy act, which must either be self-destructively heroic or self-destructively destructive. Or you may choose merely to check out forever in a puddle of drool. Assuming you survive your permanent journey to the shores of madness, your Investigator is moved to a nice, sunny hospital, where friends and family can come to visit, and the electro-shock makes everything you ever were seem burnt over and far away. Time to create a new Investigator.

Losing Sanity

Your Sanity is affected by directly experiencing the Cthulhu Mythos and by piecing together its truths from the evidence you uncover during your investigations. *You cannot make a test to avoid losing Sanity.*

You lose Sanity in one of two main ways:

- A Mythos shock drops your Stability pool to 0 or below.
- You use the Cthulhu Mythos ability.

Beholding one of the gods or titans of the Mythos, and a few other specific magical or Mythos stimuli, can also cost you Sanity, but this is rare. Such happenings are covered in the relevant entries in the *Cthulhu Mythos* chapter.

Mythos Shocks

Each time you are **shaken** by a Mythos encounter or attack (when your Stability drops to between 0 and -5), your Sanity *rating* drops by 1 point.

Each time you are **blasted** by a Mythos encounter or attack (when your Stability drops to between -6 and -11), your Sanity *rating* drops by 2 points. You can only suffer one such Sanity *rating* loss (the most severe) in a given investigation.

Cthulhu Mythos Ability Use

Using the Cthulhu Mythos ability (see p. 34) to "piece together fragments of dissociated knowledge" and gain insight into an adventure invites the loss of both Stability and (if the discovery is terrifying enough) Sanity. *You cannot make a test to avoid this loss.* The degree of loss does not depend on the number of Cthulhu Mythos pool points spent (if any), but on the nature of the revelation.

The Keeper should *not* enforce losses if the *player* deduces the horrible truth without actually using his Investigator's Cthulhu Mythos ability. This is merely heads-up thinking, and should be rewarded. Any player can, of course, request such a loss for his Investigator, but it's easier to just use Cthulhu Mythos to earn one and confirm your deduction.

Any Sanity loss from Cthulhu Mythos use cannot be denied away - such knowledge comes from within, and the Investigator knows it to be accurate.

Use the chart on page 76 as a guideline, but the Keeper should take care to handcraft really powerful revelations to the individual Investigator.

Damaging Pillars of Sanity

An Investigator who has lost 3 points of Sanity may decide that one of her Pillars of Sanity (see p. 46) has "crumbled from within," thus avoiding the shock of its destruction. The player should roleplay this loss of belief. If the Pillar of Sanity is intimately related to an ability (religious faith and Theology, or orthodox science and Geology, for instance), the Investigator might break into sobs, or ranting, or ranting sobs, when she uses that ability. Since this is a roleplaying consequence, if your game allows Pulp-style Sanity recovery (see p. 81), it can happen over and over.

Investigators who lose their last Pillar of Sanity, either by having it smashed, or seeing their Sanity *rating* drop to 2 or below, have only instinct to keep them afloat in a horrific world. They suffer a +1 to all Difficulties for Stability tests.

Lost Sanity and Drives

Investigators who suffer a revelation that proves their Drive to be meaningless can no longer gain Stability from following it. They can still lose Stability by *not* following their Drive, raging helplessly at the mechanical fate that enmeshes them within its toils. Again, this is a swell opportunity for roleplaying.

Avoiding Sanity Loss

It is possible to avoid the worst of a Sanity loss, either by denying you ever saw anything, or by fainting before you see the worst of it.

Denial

"There is reason to hope that my experience was wholly or partly an hallucination — for which, indeed, abundant causes existed... Mercifully there is no proof, for in my fright I lost the awesome object which would — if real and brought out of that noxious abyss — have formed irrefutable evidence."

— The Shadow Out of Time

At the Keeper's discretion, such a Sanity loss might be only temporary. If, at the end of the adventure, there is *absolutely no proof* of your horrible experience – samples, photographs, recordings, eerie artifacts – then your Sanity rating recovers by 1 point. This may lead to conflicts with more scholarly-minded Investigators who wish to save such things for future study. The Keeper will often provide a convenient lightning blast, all-consuming conflagration, or sudden subsidence of the building, but if not, feel free to destroy the evidence yourself in a mindless frenzy.

The Keeper may require your Investigator to take a mental illness (such as delusion, multiple personality disorder, or selective amnesia), or at least provide an excellent "cover memory" describing what you believe "actually" happened. If your Investigator acts on Mythos knowledge gained from the episode, the Keeper is within her rights to immediately penalize you 1 Sanity rating point as the traumatic memories force their way back to the surface.

You cannot recover Sanity without losing it first.

If It Weren't For Bad Luck, I'd Have No Luck At All

If a player decides to take Bad Luck (or Cursed) as a Drive, when the Keeper hoses his Investigator more than she does the others (the Deep Ones attack him first, he drops the lantern, reads the inscription, touches the exposed wiring, etc), she should give that Investigator a Stability reward just as if the player had followed his Investigator's Drive on purpose. (You can explain this in game terms by saying the Investigator is so used to the universe hating him that such things are actually kind of comforting, but it's really just a meta-game mechanical effect.) Since a player cannot resist Bad Luck, unlike other Drives, the issue of a Stability penalty doesn't arise.

If your Sanity was driven to 0 or lower by the shock, you can no longer deny the terrible beauty of the Mythos.

Fainting

"Presently she fainted, although she is still unable to recall the precise and immediate cause. Memory sometimes makes merciful deletions."

— The Case of Charles Dexter Ward

An Investigator may be so overcome by shock that he faints, his nervous system choosing oblivion as preferable to the ineffable radiance of the true state of things.

Anagnorisis, or, The Big Reveal

The key moment in any Lovecraft story – or in any drama whatsoever – is when the truth comes out and all hell breaks loose. Aristotle called it the *anagnorisis*; with a nod to Raymond Chandler, we call it the "big reveal."

In the Pulp idiom, the big reveal is nothing more than the solution to the mystery, or finally getting to see the monster in a good light (or through a rifle scope). But in the Purist idiom, it is the moment that the main character pieces together the nature of the Mythos and goes to pieces – when Wilmarth sees the face and hands on the desk, when Thurston realizes the Cthulhu cult is still active and goes to his fate, when Olmstead realizes he has the Deep One taint, when young Danforth looks back and discerns that Poe and Alhazred were not writing fiction or mysticism.

In a Purist *Trail of Cthulhu* game, the big reveal is one that makes plain the essential folly or pointlessness of your Drive, often by means of some newly discovered fact about yourself or your family. Investigators seeking academic credibility realize that publishing their studies will doom humanity; those seeking revenge realize that their dead loved ones were willing sacrifices; those seeking power for its own sake realize that it can only come by surrendering your free will to monsters.

Once the big reveal is uncovered, your Investigator no longer has any Drive whatsoever. He also suffers an immediate loss of 8 Stability points, or *triple* the normal loss from whatever shock caused the big reveal, *whichever is greater.* If the big reveal also entails a Sanity loss, that loss is doubled.

This is almost always the end of the Investigator's story – he can write it down as a cautionary narrative if he survives, and then be dragged howling off to an institution or end it all with one last gunshot. Or he can die horribly (and informatively), blasted by a convenient lightning bolt or torn to pieces by his ghoul ancestors. If his Sanity rating has dropped to 0, he might even disappear to join the Mythos, becoming a villain for future adventures.

If an Investigator somehow survives the big reveal with his sanity and selfhood remotely intact, he must retire immediately to keep bees or raise the perfect avocado. He can become a truculent, reluctant source of information for junior Investigators, but he will never again so much as spend a pool point to battle the Mythos.

Needless to say, this is an optional rule.

Cthulhu Mythos Stability and Sanity Loss Table

Revelation or Intuition	Stability Pool Loss	Sanity Pool Loss
Some aspect of the Mythos is behind this mystery; any specifics are either comfortably distant in space or time, or not immediately relevant to your larger concerns	2	0
This Mythos truth poses a clear and present danger to innocents; this truth goes deeper, reaches back farther, or has wider implications, than you previously believed	3	1
This Mythos truth poses a clear and present danger to you or your loved ones; this truth is global or epochal in scope	4	1
This Mythos truth shatters one of your Pillars of Sanity	6	2
This Mythos truth could destroy the world or is doing so right now, probably inevitably; this truth proves your Drive to be meaningless or doomed	8	3

If the player wishes, he may declare that his Investigator faints dead away rather than fully absorbing a given Mythos experience. Such an Investigator loses only 1 Sanity pool point, but may play no further part in the scene. Investigators cannot "faint away" lost Sanity from spells they cast (although they surely can avoid seeing what they summoned), nor avoid the costs of using the Cthulhu Mythos ability.

The Keeper is well within her rights to strip, kidnap, inject with strange experimental serum, collapse a building upon, or in any other way maltreat the Investigator's unconscious form, especially if the fainter's fellow-Investigators flee the scene and leave him to his fate.

The Keeper should, however, follow two guidelines in such circumstances. First, if the fate of the fainter is a mystery, she should be prepared to offer clues to its solution, just as she would any other occult horror in the game. (Those clues may come in a future adventure, of course.) Second, the Keeper should avoid just killing the fainter outright. It's weak narrative, it's bad drama, and it's just plain counter-productive game play. Horror role-playing is a constant collaboration; by fainting, a player is offering a valuable resource – and considerable trust — to the Keeper. Don't squander either.

Mental Illness

This is a long-term effect of being **blasted** by severe Stability loss. The type of insanity you suffer depends on the source incident.

Shell Shock

If the incident that drove you to mental illness was mundane or merely supernatural (not a Mythos occurrence), you suffer from Shell Shock. You are haunted by dreams of the incident, and spend your days in a constant state of anxiety and alert, as if prepared for it to repeat itself at any moment. Whenever your senses register any input reminding you of the incident, you must make a Stability test (Difficulty 4) or freeze up. If you freeze up, you are unable to take any action for fifteen minutes and remain **shaken** (see p. 74) for twenty-four hours after that.

Tests to see if you show symptoms of Shell Shock do not in and of themselves lower your Stability pool. Suffering from Shell Shock does not, by itself, alter your investigative abilities or interpersonal skills, unless you encounter your shock stimulus and fail a Stability test as noted above.

Mythos Madness

If driven to mental illness by a Mythos occurrence, you face a range of possible mental disorders, as your hold on consensus reality has come undone in some part. The Keeper rolls on the following chart (dropping the two least appropriate entries) or chooses a disorder based on the triggering circumstance. The player is then sent out of the room, while the Keeper and other players collaborate on a way to heighten his sense of dislocation and disorientation.

Tediously Obligatory Disclaimer

This game simulates mental illness as seen in Lovecraftian and Lovecraft-inspired fiction and gaming. It should not be confused with real psychology, even the real (and mostly outmoded) psychology of the 1920s and 1930s. Although no disrespect is intended to those suffering the real-life effects of mental illness, we submit to those concerned by this issue that horror is meant to be irresponsible, disreputable, and upsetting.

If a really juicy method occurs to the Keeper and players, they should feel free to substitute their brain wave for any of the following:

- **Delusion.** The other players and Keeper decide on a mundane detail of the world which is no longer true and has never been true. For example, there might be no such thing as a squirrel, a Studebaker, or orange juice. Maybe Al Capone doesn't exist, or is an innocent florist. Investigators and supporting characters deny knowledge of the chosen item, person, or event.

- **Homicidal Mania.** The Keeper takes the player aside, tells him that he knows one

of the other Investigators is a supernatural creature, and tells him just how to kill the monster.

- **Megalomania.** When the Investigator fails at a dramatic moment, the Keeper describes the outcome of his ability attempt as successful, then asks the player to leave the room. Then the Keeper describes the real results to the other players, and invites the player of the megalomaniac back into the room. Alternatively (and cruelly), the Keeper and players decide on one of the Investigator's abilities that doesn't work, and never has.

Madness - another approach

In playtesting, a few players really hate this collaborative approach. If you suspect that you are one such player, you and the Keeper should work together to determine a disorder that does not rely on the other players' collaboration. Pretend to be paranoid, have a terrible fear of the dark, or stutter whenever you meet a stranger.

In the publisher's playtest, we used both methods at once. The player roleplayed amnesia, while the rest of the players assumed that the character's name had always been different. Neither party knew of the others' choice. The consequential confusion and disjointedness was gratifying.

- **Multiple Personality Disorder.** At moments of stress, another player is assigned control of the Investigator, speaking and acting as if he's an entirely different person.

- **Obsession.** The Investigator must take 4 pool points from any abilities and turn them into dedicated pool points (see p. 54) that can only be used in the presence of, or in response or relation to, the obsessive object.

- **Paranoia.** The other players are instructed to act as if they're trying to keep straight faces when the affected player returns. Occasionally they exchange notes, make hand signals to the Keeper,

or use meaningless code words, as if communicating something important the player is unaware of.

- **Phobia.** The Keeper and other players decide on a given stimulus based on the triggering event. The Keeper then asks the stricken Investigator for Sense Trouble tests when faced with that stimulus, and describes in great detail the dangers that subway entrance, temperature, or NPC presents.

- **Selective Amnesia.** The group decides on an event that did happen in the world that the Investigator has now forgotten all about. He's married, or killed someone, or pseudonymously written a best-selling book. Everyone he meets refers to this new, verifiable fact that he has no knowledge of.

Refreshing Stability During A Session

Investigators on the ragged edge of madness can recover Stability during an adventure either with the sage counsel of their friends, or (in Pulp modes) from the inner glow of accomplishment.

Psychological Triage

An Investigator with the Psychoanalysis ability can spend points from that pool to help another refresh spent Stability points. The spender may take no other action, and must make a Difficulty 4 Psychoanalysis test (Difficulty 3 for Clergy and Alienists). If the attempt is unsuccessful, the spender cannot re-roll for the same character until that character loses more Stability points. For every Psychoanalysis point spent (not including points spent to make the test), the recipient gains 2 Stability points.

If an Investigator is acting in an erratic manner due to mental illness, another Investigator can spend Psychoanalysis (1 point for an Alienist, 2 points otherwise) to snap him into a state of temporary lucidity. As in the previous case, the spender must make a Psychoanalysis test (Difficulty 3). The target will then act rationally for the remainder of the current scene, or until he next suffers a Stability loss.

Confidence

If the player suggests a spend for her Investigator, and the Keeper and other players agree that the result was especially impressive, she may roll one die and refresh that many Stability points to reflect her Investigator's restored confidence in herself. Only one confidence roll can be made per player in a given session, and it would be unusual for there to be more than one confidence roll in an entire session.

Deep Ones are stalking Martin and his team, plus the increasingly panicky NPC librarian, Agnes Bowtree, through the Santiago Library. Agnes' shrieks have been attracting unwelcome attention from patrons and possible Cthulhu cultists alike, and Martin's player Josh decides to solve the problem. He spends 1 point from Martin's Reassurance pool and Martin looks Agnes right in the eyes. "Lady," he says, low and calm, "I know how you feel. I've been there. These things killed my partner, and it near killed me. So I don't plan to let them finish with me -- and I'll die before I let them start with you. But that's not gonna happen, because we're both gonna make it out of here tonight." Josh's excellent roleplaying, combined with the revelation of Martin's tortured past, visibly impresses the Keeper and the other players. The Keeper immediately rules that Agnes calms down . . . and she remembers a back way out of the Library. The Keeper also tells Josh to go ahead and roll a Confidence die. Josh rolls a 4, and Martin refreshes 4 points in his Stability pool.

Recovery

"That one respite, short as it was, gave me the strength and sanity to endure those still greater sublimations of cosmic panic that lurked and gibbered on the road ahead."

— Under the Pyramids

Spent points from various pools refresh at different rates, depending on their narrative purpose.

Refreshing Investigative Ability Pools

Investigative ability pools are refreshed only at the end of each case, without regard to the amount of time that passes in the game world. Players seeking to husband their resources may ask you how long cases typically run, in real time. Most groups finish scenarios over 2-3 sessions. Players may revise their sense of how carefully to manage point spending as they see how quickly their group typically disposes of its cases.

Keepers running extremely long, multi-part investigations may designate certain story events as breakpoints where all investigative pools are refreshed. For example, a globe-hopping investigation where the team meets a separate Mythos cult in five different locales might allow refreshment of Investigative pools after each group of enemies is neutralized.

Refreshing General Ability Pools

Whenever the Investigators are able to create a temporary haven for themselves in which they're free from danger and horror manifestations for an hour or more, they may refresh up to three General abilities, except for Health, Sanity, and Stability. They lose all refreshed points if their supposed place of safety is penetrated or reveals itself as a place of hazard. This is an excellent time for Pulp gunslingers, especially, to fully refresh those Firearms pools.

The characters get only one opportunity for this accelerated refreshment per session.

Additionally, pools for the physical abilities of Athletics, Driving, Firearms, Fleeing, Firearms, Piloting, Riding, Scuffling, and Weapons fully refresh whenever 24 hours

of game-world time elapses since the last expenditure. The remaining General abilities refresh at the end of each case, like investigative abilities.

Refreshing Health

The Health pool refreshes over time, at a rate of 2 points per day of restful activity. (Wounded characters heal at a different rate, over a period of hospitalization; see p. 63.) Use of the First Aid ability can restore a limited number of Health points in the course of a session (see p. 63).

Refreshing Stability Between Adventures

In campaigns where the teammates' personal lives are a matter of background detail only, an Investigator's Stability automatically refreshes between adventures.

In campaigns using Sources of Stability, the Investigator must spend calm, undisturbed quality time with his Sources, allowing him to forget the shadowy world of the Mythos for a moment. Keepers who wish to add a soap opera element to their campaigns, in which the Investigators must balance the everyday pressures of ordinary life against their activities as covert battlers of the supernatural, can complicate this process. In this campaign type, the Investigators must work to keep their support networks intact. If they fail, they refresh no Stability between episodes.

Recovering Sanity

In a Purist game, there is no un-learning possible, and comfort is found only in drugged or drunken stupor. Sanity never returns.

At the conclusion of a Pulp investigation, all participating Investigators may claim a reward if they successfully defeated the Mythos. "Defeating the Mythos" generally means killing or banishing the main monster, busting up a Mythos cult, or saving an innocent target or town.

This reward is at the Keeper's discretion, and should be no more than the highest potential Sanity loss from the adventure. A good reward range to shoot for is a refreshment of 1-2 Sanity pool points; award more for a still-pulpier game. In the pulpiest games, an Investigator's Sanity pool might fully refresh from such a reward!

Head Games

"The more I reflected, the more convincing did my reasoning seem; till in the end I had a really effective bulwark against the visions and impressions which still assailed me. Suppose I did see strange things at night? These were only what I had heard and read of. Suppose I did have odd loathings and perspectives and pseudo-memories? These, too, were only echoes of myths absorbed in my secondary state. Nothing that I might dream, nothing that I might feel, could be of any actual significance."

— The Shadow Out of Time

Mental illness can be cured through prolonged treatment using the Psychoanalysis ability. At the beginning of each scenario, in a prologue scene preceding the main action, the character administering the treatment makes a Psychoanalysis test. The Difficulty of this test is usually 4; in a Purist game, it is equal to twice the patient's current Cthulhu Mythos rating, or 4, whichever is higher. After three consecutive successful tests, and three consecutive scenarios in which the patient's Stability pool remains above 0 at all times, the mental illness goes away.

However, if the Investigator ever again acquires a mental illness, he regains the condition he was previously cured of. Permanent cure then becomes impossible.

Such prolonged treatment can also be used to replace a shattered Pillar of Sanity or disproven Drive with a different one. No Investigator can have more than one Pillar of Sanity or Drive replaced at a time. No Investigator can have more than one Pillar for each 3 points in his Sanity rating.

The same method can bolster a patient's Sanity behind a wall of self-delusion. This is a psychological construct, providing "false Sanity" equal to half the patient's total lost Sanity, or up to the 10 minus Cthulhu Mythos cap, whichever is lower. However, the next loss by the patient of 2 or more points of Sanity destroys the bulwark of denial, and the entire "false Sanity" total is also lost. During the three scenarios the treatment lasts, the patient cannot use Cthulhu Mythos without negating this therapy.

Dr Pembrose attempts to convince Martin that his recent horrible

experiences have a rational explanation. He succeeds in his string of three Psychoanalysis tests. Martin began the game with a Sanity of 10, and has lost 6 points over the course of the campaign. Martin currently has a Cthulhu Mythos rating of 3. Dr Pembrose can falsely restore half the lost Sanity, 3 points, giving Martin a Sanity rating of 7. (If Martin had a Cthulhu Mythos rating of 4, he could only gain 2 points of false confidence from Dr Pembrose's therapy, since his Sanity would be capped at 10-4, or 6.) But the next time Martin loses 2 points of Sanity, he will also lose the 3 points gained from Pembrose's deceptions, for a total loss of 5. If Martin loses only 1 point at a time, however, he can still desperately convince himself that the world he knows makes sense.

Improving Your Investigator

At the end of each investigation, each player gets 2 build points for each session they participated in. (This assumes a small number of 3-4 hour sessions; if you play in shorter bursts, modify accordingly.) Players who had Investigators die in the course of the investigation only get points for each session involving their current character.

These build points can be spent to increase either Investigative or General abilities, at a 1-to-1 basis. You may acquire new abilities or bolster existing ones. If necessary to preserve credibility, rationalize new abilities as areas of expertise you've had all along, but are only revealing later in the series.

You may also reassign 1 or 2 build points, justifying it as skill atrophy: "I've let my Photography become so rusty, what with spending all this time in libraries."

You may not add *or reassign* points to Credit Rating, Cthulhu Mythos, or Sanity in this process. The Keeper may adjust your Credit Rating up (if you find buried treasure or get decorated by General Fuller for your services to the Crown) or down (if you have allowed your contacts and social network to atrophy over several adventures, or if your farm blows away in the Dust Bowl).

For a Purist Lovecraftian game, nothing you do can improve your Investigator. He is lucky to still be able to hold his own after his shattering experiences. The Keeper may still allow you to reassign points.

TEN YEARS
UNDER THE EARTH
BY
NORBERT
CASTERET

Technology, Weapons, and Equipment

"I set out for home, where I bathed, ate, and gave by telephone an order for a pickaxe, a spade, a military gas-mask, and six carboys of sulphuric acid, all to be delivered the next morning..."

— The Shunned House

The technology of the Thirties should be familiar fare to any player who has watched her share of World War II movies. It's a heavy, industrial, mechanical tech, full of diesel, propellers, and whirring cogwheels. The workhorses of the world are the railroad engine, the steel mill, and the hydroelectric dam. Television is cutting-edge mad science, computers are still just mathematicians' daydreams, and

Money

In the 1930s, much like the modern era, the plethora of local currencies are mostly irrelevant. Virtually all serious business, and even more criminal business, is done in one of three currencies: the US dollar, the British pound sterling, and the French franc. Almost anywhere in the world, a fat wad of one of these three currencies and the Streetwise ability will get you what you need without bothering about exchange rates. Except, of course, between those three: in 1935, to pick a year at random, the pound was worth about $5, and the franc about 7 cents. (Once things get dicey in Europe, the Swiss franc – about 33 cents in 1935 – comes into its own.) Totalitarian states prefer to sell only in outside currencies, and buy only with their own, but cannot always get such sweetheart deals. Internally, they can enforce whatever farcical exchange rate they like, although trading nations need to maintain some realism: the Reichsmark is rather closer to the official 40 cent exchange rate in 1935 than the Japanese yen is to 84 cents or the Soviet ruble is to $8.71.

oil has been "the new coal" for over a decade now.

Vehicles

In general, if an Investigator has a Driving ability rating, he has a motor vehicle suitable to his Credit Rating. As a general rule, cars between $500 and $1,000 are about right for Credit Rating 4 owners. Cars over $3,000 are driven primarily by Credit Rating 6+ owners, or by their chauffeurs. That said, the Keeper may allow Investigators to own used or rebuilt cars (which may require more frequent Mechanical Repair tests), inherited cars (which down-on-their-luck Dilettantes can't replace if wrecked by a monster), or stolen cars (with a Cop Talk, the cop just impounds the vehicle without charging the driver).

An Investigator must have at least a Driving rating of 2 to own (and be able to drive) a motorcycle, but they are extremely affordable and widely available used or rebuilt at any Credit Rating over 0.

The motor vehicle table gives statistics for a sampling of representative and evocative period cars and trucks. Speeds represent top road speeds; cruising speed is normally two-thirds, or even half, that amount. The Keeper is welcome to move prices and speeds up and down to indicate closeout sales, lemons, or precision-tuned racing vehicles. Most cars have two running boards each capable of carrying a clinging Investigator at a pinch. The Keeper may require tests of Athletics to stay on if the driver spends any Driving points during the ensuing chase sequence.

Under off-road conditions, a vehicle's speed is halved, except for those vehicles indicated with an 'OR' in the table. Their speed is only reduced by one-fourth. Poor driving conditions, hills, and so forth cancel out; each party to a chase is usually affected equally, although the Keeper may always rule otherwise for extremely specialized circumstances.

Motorcycles may mount sidecars; if so, their top speed is halved.

A truck can carry the amount of cargo indicated in its description; a "1-ton" truck, for instance, can carry 1 ton of cargo. (It weighs considerably more than 1 ton, even empty.)

Car chases work like normal chases, with Driving instead of Fleeing as the contested ability. In straight car chases, if a car's top speed is lower than its competitor's by 10 mph or more, the driver of the car with the lower top speed has a +1 to all Difficulty Numbers in the driving contest; if it's lower by 30 mph or more, the add is +2. The

Monsters vs Machines

Most monster chases will likely occur on foot, or pseudopod, or tentacle, or what-have-you. But in Pulp games especially, a monster may pursue the Investigators' vehicle as it flees the scene, in a test of the Investigators' Driving (or Piloting) vs the monster's Athletics. A ghoul, Deep One, or similar beast might make an Athletics test (Difficulty 6) to leap onto the running board of an escaping car and continue the fight that way.

Failing that, most monsters cannot outrun a speeding car, or outfly a speeding plane. If the Investigators make their initial test, the vehicle evades such slowpokes and the scene is over. Although the Keeper is welcome to change monster speeds in her game, we suggest instead ambushes, or presenting some obstacle (muddy roads, dense fog, cultists with spiked chains in the path) that the monster can avoid but the vehicle cannot. Monsters also have any number of interesting attacks that they can make on a fragile car or even-more fragile airplane. A Hound of Tindalos or dimensional shambler can even appear inside a moving vehicle, for extra fun.

With all this in mind, the following monsters can probably hold their own in a car chase and make it a full-fledged contest: byakhee, hunting horrors, mi-go (chasing cars from the air by cutting across "as the crow flies"), nightgaunts, shantaks, and shoggoths (off-road). Shan can maintain a chase until the Investigators can escape the environs of Goatswood (up to the Keeper – who may rule that the shan are trying to herd their prey deeper into the forest). In their own terrain, gnoph-keh and sand-dwellers can probably sustain a chase against cars for two or even three rounds.

In the air, only byakhee and shantaks can sustain a long chase against an aircraft, although the Keeper may rule that hunting horrors or nightgaunts require 2 successful tests to evade rather than the standard 1.

Xothians, of course, can easily pace any ship or boat that humans can construct.

Vehicle Table

Vehicle	Cost	Speed (mph)	Notes
1928 Indian 101 Scout motorcycle	$200	75	Provides automatic +1 to roll in all off-road Driving tests; OR
1936 Harley-Davidson 61E "Knucklehead" motorcycle	$300	120	OR
1927 Ford Model A	$400	75	Two-seater with open rumble seat in back
1935 Willys 77 sedan	$500	75	
1933 Chevrolet ½-ton pickup truck	$550	60	OR
1935 BMW R-12 motorcycle	$600	70	OR
1933 Reo Speed-Wagon 1-ton light delivery truck	$650	80	Refreshes 1 Driving pool point per scene
1935 DeSoto Airstream coupe	$700	85	
1937 Ford ½-ton panel van	$700	60	
1932 Dodge 1-ton truck	$750	75	
1935 Packard One-Twenty touring car	$1,100	85	
1936 Lincoln-Zephyr V12 sedan	$1,250	90	
1934 Chrysler 8 Airflow sedan	$1,350	85	
1930 Ford 2½-ton truck	$1,600	55	OR
1935 Auburn 851 Speedster	$2,000	100	
1937 Studebaker President 8 sedan	$2,500	75	
1931 Stutz Bearcat roadster	$3,500	70	Two-seater; Provides automatic +1 to roll in all road Driving tests
1930 Cadillac V16 sedan	$5,400	90	
1937 Jaguar SS 100 Sport	$9,500	100	
1932 Maybach DS8 "Zeppelin"	$16,000	105	
1938 Mercedes-Benz "Grosser" 770 touring sedan	$20,000	80	Often encountered as an armored (+4 against bullets; top speed 60) limousine
1932 Duesenberg SJ coupe	$25,000	130	Two-seater
1935 Rolls-Royce Phantom III limousine	$50,000	90	Seats eight

Keeper may rule that local traffic conditions, twisty narrow streets, or other considerations obviate this advantage. She may also rule that the much faster car speeds away and ends the scene, if it makes better dramatic sense than gaming out a car chase.

The aircraft table is similar, although access to aircraft is usually restricted to Investigators with the Occupation of Pilot or with Credit Ratings of 7+. Aircraft with 'SE' noted are single-engine light aircraft. (High-performance single-engine fighter planes such as the Spitfire require a dedicated Piloting slot, although a kindly Keeper may allow a "bush pilot" to fly one at a +2 Difficulty penalty.) Speeds are top burst speeds; cruising speeds, like those for ground vehicles, are normally half to two-thirds as fast. Climb angles, ceilings, turn radii, and so forth are outside the purview of the GUMSHOE rules.

Weapons

Because you demanded it: more complete weapons statistics for common or evocative firearms of the 1930s. See the table overleaf.

Aircraft Table

Aircraft	Cost	Range (miles)	Speed (mph)	Notes
1917 Curtiss JN-4 "Jenny"	$2K	250	75	Typical barnstormer biplane; two-seater; SE
1924 Dornier Do J "Wal" seaplane	$14K	2,250	110	2-4 crew + 10 passengers
1933 DeHavilland DH.89 "Dragon Rapide"	$20K	550	150	1 crew + 8 passengers
1934 Cierva C.30A autogiro	$20K	285	110	Single-seat; can land near-vertically; requires only short takeoff
1929 Lockheed Vega 5	$30K	675	185	Six seats; provides automatic +1 to roll in all mid-air Piloting tests; SE
1933 Boeing 247	$44K	745	200	3 crew + 10 passengers
1935 Douglas DC-3 cargo plane	$47K	1,500	150	3 seats + cargo space can hold 20 people; refreshes 1 Piloting point per scene
1934 Sikorsky S-42 flying boat	$50K	1,950	180	4 crew + 37 passengers
1938 Supermarine Spitfire	$160K	1,150	380	Not for sale; one-seat fighter plane; 2 cannons, 4 machine-guns
1928 *Graf Zeppelin* airship	$3 million+	10,000	75	Not for sale; 36 crew + 24 passengers

Firearms Table

Damage	Weapon	Shots	Cost	Notes
Light firearms; +0 damage	Webley & Scott Police Model .32 ACP automatic pistol (1906)	8	$10	
	TT-33 Tokarev 7.62 mm automatic pistol (1933)	8	$45	Soviet military/police sidearm
	Nambu Type 14 8mm automatic pistol	8	$40	Japanese military sidearm
	Mauser "Broomhandle" 7.62 mm automatic pistol (1896)	10	$50	
	Remington .41 Short double Derringer (1866)	2	$20	+1 to Difficulty of any test to find on carrier; only point-blank range
	Colt Police Positive .32 revolver (1907)	6	$15	US police sidearm
	Walther PPK .32 automatic pistol (1931)	7	$70	
	Remington M34 .22LR sporting rifle (1932)	20	$45	
	Mannlicher-Carcano M1891 6.5 mm bolt-action carbine (1892)	6	$20	Italian combat rifle; statistics also apply to Japanese Arisaka Type 44 combat rifle
	Winchester M1912 20-gauge pump shotgun (1912)	5	$50	
	Remington M32 20-gauge shotgun (1932)	2	$35	Double-barreled
Heavy firearms; +1 damage	Very 12-gauge flare pistol (1882)	1	$30	Only does damage at point-blank (no bonus) or close range; starts fires if it hits flammable material at up to long range
	Colt M1911A1 .45 ACP automatic pistol (1926)	7	$50	US military sidearm; all tests to repair or un-jam are at -1 Difficulty
	Luger P08 9mm automatic pistol (1908)	8	$50	German military sidearm
	Walther P38 9mm automatic pistol (1938)	8	$75	German military sidearm
	FN Browning High-Power 9 mm semi-automatic pistol (1935)	13	$75	
	Webley No. 1 Mk IV .455 SAA revolver (1915)	6	$25	U.K. military sidearm
	Smith & Wesson .38 Special revolver (1902)	6	$30	US police sidearm
	Smith & Wesson Model 27 .357 Magnum revolver (1927)	6	$80	
	Thompson M1921 submachine gun (1921)	20, 30, 50, or 100	$200	See p. 65
	"Schmeisser" MP28 submachine gun (1928)	32	$200	See p. 65
	Mauser 98K 7.92 mm rifle (1935)	5	$125	German combat rifle; statistics also apply to Soviet Moisin-Nagant M10 7.62 mm combat carbine (cost $100)
	M1 Garand .30-06 rifle (1936)	8	$120	US combat rifle
	Lee-Enfield MkIII .303 rifle (1907)	10	$100	U.K. combat rifle
	Winchester M1912 12-gauge pump shotgun (1912)	5	$50	
	Remington M32 12-gauge shotgun (1932)	2	$35	Double-barreled
Very heavy firearms	Holland & Holland Double Express .600 elephant rifle (1903)	2	$500	Does +2 damage; next round action must be an Athletics test (Difficulty 3) to remain upright
	Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) .303 machine gun (1918)	20	$500	Does +2 damage; requires bipod or prone firer

Remember, all shotguns are considered heavy firearms at point-blank range, and light firearms at near range. At point-blank or close range, add an additional +1 to damage if you fire both barrels of a double-barreled shotgun simultaneously.

Hardware and Sundries

And what would a historical setting section be without a price guide? A page or two shorter, that's what. The table overleaf is intended to paint a broad picture; prices for clothing, food, and other goods varied as much in the 1930s as they do today. If you don't see an item, as a rule of thumb, divide its 21st-century price by 12.

Exotic Equipment

"We had devised two weapons to fight it; a large and specially fitted Crookes tube operated by powerful storage batteries and provided with peculiar screens and reflectors, in case it proved intangible and opposable only by vigorously destructive ether radiations, and a pair of military flame-throwers of the sort used in the World War, in case it proved partly material and susceptible of mechanical destruction..."

— The Shunned House

In "The Shunned House," Elihu Whipple obtains the Crookes tube and flame-throwers by his "natural leadership," not by slapping cash down on the barrel. If the Investigators decide they need arcane machinery, illegal goods, or military weapons for their monster stakeout then they should earn them the old-fashioned way – with interpersonal abilities.

Scientist Investigators can use Reassurance to borrow the Tesla coil from the lab, military officer Investigators can employ Intimidation to get land-mines from an armory clerk, and so forth. With a white coat or hard hat, Disguise can get the Investigator access to labs or construction equiment; Flattery might get the reclusive NPC inventor to bring his microwave beam along. Players can use their Investigators' pre-existing contacts to rustle up weird gear, or in extremis default to Credit Rating ("surely I went to Yale with someone who owns an autogiro") or Streetwise ("we're in luck; there's a chemical plant in Gary with a bent guard where we can get all the pesticide we need"). The overarching goal should be to knit strange equipment into the story, rather than just letting the Investigators stop off at Crookes Tubes R Us.

Clothing and Accessories	Price	Notes
Boots, leather	$3-$10	
Clothing, ladies', one outfit	$3-$12+	Dress, stockings, hat
Clothing, men's, one outfit	$13-$27+	Suit, shirt, tie, socks, hat
Coat, leopard/mink	$90/$585	
Coat, trench	$11	
Gear, arctic	$60	Parka, boots, gloves
Gear, safari	$25	Leather jacket, khaki shirt and trousers, pith helmet
Gear, seafaring	$15	Peacoat or raincoat, cap, work shirt, sweater, canvas trousers
Shoes, ladies'/mens'	$1+/$4+	
Spectacles	$9	
Tuxedo	$25	Still called a "dinner jacket"
Watch, pocket or wrist	$2-$20+	

Food and shelter	Price	Notes
Apartment, per month	$12-$50+	
Bread, loaf	$0.05	
Coca-Cola, 12 oz. glass bottle	$0.05	
College tuition, year	$200-$2,000	Harvard College: $4,500
Hotel room, per night	$0.25-$3	Waldorf-Astoria, NYC: $5-$10
House, three-bedroom	$2,800	
Meal, automat	$0.10-$0.25	Coffee is always a nickel
Meal, home-cooked	$0.65	3-lb. roast, potatoes, onions
Meal, restaurant	$0.25-$1+	Steak dinner at the Rainbow Room, NYC: $3, plus $1 for wine
Milk, quart	$0.10	
Movie ticket and popcorn	$0.20-$0.50	Newsreel and cartoons included
Whiskey, shot/bottle	$0.35+/$4+	Less for rotgut

Adventuring Gear	Price	Notes
Alarm clock, wind-up	$1-$5	Makes an ideal bomb timer!
Ammunition, 50 rounds	$0.30	Shotgun shells $0.70 for 25
Bicycle	$24-$45	Top speed 20 mph; OR
Binoculars, 8-power	$25	$12 for 5-power
Camera	$5-$40	$0.20 for one roll of b&w film (8 shots)
Camera, 8mm motion-picture	$30-$50	$4 for one reel of b&w film (8 mins)
Chain, per foot	$0.50	$1 for a padlock
Cigarettes, per pack	$0.15	$2 for a box of cigars
Flashlight, 2-cell	$1	$0.05 per battery
Gas mask	$5	
Geiger counter	$10	
Generator, portable	$120-$300	
Gold, per troy ounce	$35	Jewelry and rare coins will be more
Guitar	$9	
Lantern, kerosene	$4	
Medical bag and kit	$20	
Tools, carpenters' or locksmiths'	$10	
Trap, break-leg	$6	Sense Trouble to avoid or Conceal to plant; does +1 damage and immobilizes limb
Typewriter	$20-$45	$50-$70 for portable
Welding/cutting torch and tanks	$95	$8 acetylene refill
Zippo lighter (1932)	$1	

Transportation and Communication	Price	Notes
Airfare, per mile	$0.12	Travel time 90-150 mph
Bribe, for speeding/illegal firearms/ illicit entry/smuggling (plus Cop Talk, Reassurance, etc)	$5/$20/$10 /$10-$100	A policeman's pay is about $3 per day
Gasoline, per gallon	$0.19	
Native bearer, per day	$0.05-$0.25	Native guide $1 per day
Ocean liner fare	$10-$100+	600 miles per day, weather permitting
Pullman sleeping-car ticket, per mile	$0.02-$0.07	Average 40 mph or 900 miles per day, depending on stops
Telegram, per word	$0.05	$0.25 international
Tires, set of 4	$4-$10	
Train ticket, day trip, per mile	$0.04	Average 35 mph, depending on stops

Putting it all together

"It occurred to us, too, that our venture was far from safe, for in what strength the thing might appear no one could tell. But we deemed the game worth the hazard, and embarked on it alone and unhesitatingly..."

— "The Shunned House"

The purpose of playing *Trail of Cthulhu* is to collaborate in telling a horror mystery story. In this collaboration, it's the players' job to feel the horror, to figure out the mystery, and to willingly involve themselves in the story. It's the Keeper's job to make the players' jobs possible in the first place.

Tips For Players

"A new and burning curiosity grew within me, compared to which my boyish curiosity was feeble and inchoate. The first revelation led to an exhaustive research, and finally to that shuddering quest which proved so disastrous to me and mine."

— The Shunned House

A monster investigation is full of dead ends, red herrings, and utter confusion. *Roleplaying* a monster investigation shouldn't be. Herewith, then, we provide a few techniques or concepts to take on board that can help maximize your own fun.

Believe You Might Succeed

Yes, this is a game of horror, in which your Investigator might well be slaughtered, carried off to Yuggoth, or driven irrevocably insane. That said, the best way to fail is to become defensive and do nothing. Don't let the fear bring your planning ability to a halt. Instead, talk through the most obvious options, quickly pick the one that seems the most appealing, and then execute that plan. Will something horrible happen? Of course it will — it's a horror game! Something horrible will happen no matter what your plan is. At best, you'll find one that requires desperation and daring, and might still cost you your lives. But no fun whatsoever will happen unless you choose something to do and do it.

So be bold and seize the initiative. Pick the type of terrifying risk you're most able to confront and go after it with both hands. Who knows? Maybe you'll surprise the Keeper, if not the monsters. As in any game, the Keeper will allow any halfway credible approach you come up with a good chance of success, and will place nasty obstacles in your way to make it more exciting. Pick something quickly, grit your teeth, and send your Investigator into that warehouse.

In the world of the Cthulhu Mythos, safety is an illusion, so you might as well do *something*.

Justify Your Casting

When you created an Investigator, you cast a character – a hero — in a story. True, it's often a story about an ordinary cop or college professor who stumbles into cosmic horrors that transcend the universe. Realistically, many people would likely respond to extreme violence and eruptions of supernatural awfulness by curling up into a ball and doing nothing. Those people are called "non-player characters."

The Cthulhu Mythos is hard enough on your Investigators without you making them freak out, too. Plus, paralysis is boring, at least after the obligatory denial or disbelief in the "this … defies every known law of science" sequence. When you create your Investigator, or develop her personality during play, think about realistic ways to portray her as proactive and resourceful, even in the face of mind-shattering horror.

Players in horror games often make the mistake of thinking solely about how realistic their responses are. Instead, make interesting choices and then find a way to make them realistic. An interesting choice is one that keeps your Investigator moving and doing things.

Drives Drive You Forward

If you still find yourself unable to justify some near-suicidal plan, think of your Drive. Come up with

some reason to Drive yourself into danger, and pick up some needed Stability for doing it along the way. Look to your Drive as a source of action and inspiration, and use it to decide which near-suicidal plan is right for your Investigator.

When Stuck, Look For More Information

If you are legitimately stuck, and not just rejecting perfectly viable courses of action, don't just stick close to home hashing over your options. Investigative scenarios often bog down into speculative debate between players about what *could be* happening. Many things *can* be happening, but only one thing *is*. If more than one possible explanation ties together the clues you have so far, you need more clues.

Whenever you get stuck, **get out and gather more information**. Ask yourself what you need to know in order to formulate a plan. Then figure out how to get that information, and go out and get it. Keep a written record of all the clues, particularly the core ones that the Keeper has thrown at you, pick one that hasn't been followed up, and pursue it hard.

Talk To People

Many groups are reluctant to use their Interpersonal abilities, figuring that they can get into less trouble by sticking purely to physical clues, or thumbing through well-lit libraries in the next county. This is a disastrous mistake. Talking to witnesses, experts, and informants is by far the best way of gaining information about your situation. With information, you can find that coveted least-worst plan that will lead you to the grim final confrontation.

Keep Moving Forward

Expect to find only one major clue per scene. Although you shouldn't be too quick to abandon a scene for the next one, most groups make the opposite mistake, returning endlessly to the same few places or witnesses, hoping to scrape more info out of them. If you find a clue that leads you somewhere else —go there! Chances are, once you're there, you'll find another clue, that will in turn lead you to a new scene, with a further clue that takes you to a third scene, and so on. Unsuccessful groups endlessly re-plough the same ground. Successful ones follow a trail, just like in a kid's game of treasure hunt.

Deputize Yourself

An ordinary person might be reluctant to go out and involve themselves personally in investigations best handled by the professionals. But you've stumbled into a world of unearthly menace where, as far as you know, there are no professionals. You may feel cosmically ill-prepared to face the threat in front of you, but you know that no one else is up to it, either. As improbable as it may seem, you must take on the mantle of unofficial investigators.

Rely on your Interpersonal abilities to gain entrance to situations that would normally be closed to regular folks. Come up with suitable cover stories if need be.

Passively playing the good citizen won't save you. You must carry the ball into the enemy's court, and part the dark veil of the unknown. A few moments of reluctance is understandable and realistic. More than that is boring. Accept your weird new role in life, and make the most of it.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

Sanity[1]			
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15
Hit Threshold[3]			

Stability			
-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health			
-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name:

Drive:

Occupation:[2]

Occupational benefits:

Description:

Build Points:

SOURCES OF STABILITY:	PILLARS OF SANITY

Academic Abilities	Interpersonal Abilities	General Abilities
Accounting		
Anthropology	Assess Honesty	Athletics
Archaeology	Bargain	Conceal
Architecture	Bureaucracy	Disguise (1)
Art History	Cop Talk	Driving
Biology	Credit Rating	Electrical Repair(1)
Cthulhu Mythos[4]	Flattery	Explosives(1)
Cryptography	Interrogation	Filch
Geology	Intimidation	Firearms[5]
History	Oral History	First Aid
Languages[6]	Reassurance	Fleeing[7]
	Streetwise	Health[9]
		Hypnosis[8]
		Mechanical Repair(1)
	Technical Abilities	Piloting
Law		Preparedness
Library Use	Art	Psychoanalysis
Medicine	Astronomy	Riding
Occult	Chemistry	Sanity[9]
Physics	Craft	Stability[9]
Theology	Evidence Collection	Scuffling
	Forensics	Sense Trouble
	Locksmith	Shadowing
	Outdoorsman	Stealth
	Pharmacy	Weapons
	Photography	

[1] In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

[2] Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a * before assigning points.

[3] Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

(1) These General abiltities double up as Investigative abilities

[4] Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

[5] In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

[6] Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

[7] Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

[8] Only Alienists and Parapsycholigists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

[9] You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

CLUES

Description	Location	Leads to

CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Location	Notes

WEAPONS

Description	Range	Damage	Notes

EQUIPEMENT

Description	Cost	Notes

MYTHOS TOMES, SPELLS and ARTEFACTS

Name	Effects	Notes

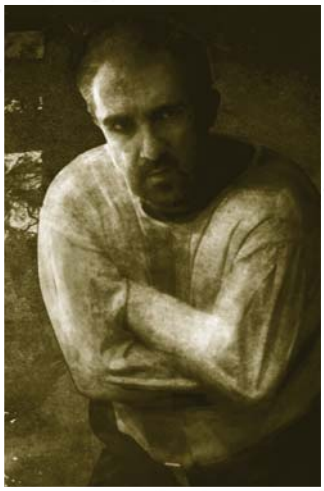
MADNESS AND SHOCK

SPECIAL BENEFITS AND DEDICATED POOLS

Appendix: Contributors

Kenneth Hite

Kenneth Hite claims to have bought the first copy of Call of Cthulhu sold in Oklahoma City, in August of 1981. Since then, he has moved to dread and night-haunted Chicago, written all or part of seventy or so roleplaying game books (including *Nightmares of Mine, Dubious Shards,* and *Adventures Into Darkness*), and acquired the requisite Lovecraftian cat. His "Tour de Lovecraft: The Settings" column appears in *Weird Tales* magazine; his *Suppressed Transmission* column explores the Higher Strangeness in *Pyramid*. His wife Sheila knits.



Robin D Laws

Robin D Laws is a writer and game designer. His roleplaying game designs for Pelgrane Press are The Dying Earth, The Esoterrorists, Fear Itself and the upcoming Mutant City Blues.

Robin's other roleplaying games include Feng Shui , Rune, HeroQuest and Og: Unearthed Editions. Among Robin's six novels are Pierced Heart, The Rough and the Smooth, and Freedom Phalanx, a book set in the universe of the City Of Heroes computer game.

2007 saw the publication of 40 Years Of Gen Con, an oral history of the hobby games industry's biggest convention. Always ready to take an intriguing career detour, his various past projects include collectible card games, computer games, and comic books.

Jérôme Huguenin

Jérome is a French freelance illustrator and graphic designer born in 1975. He is married with one little girl.
He first worked with Pelgrane Press on the Dying Earth RPG, (top rated in his game collection) and designed all the previous GUMSHOE books.
He will provide art for the up coming GUMSHOE books, including *Mutant City Blues* and *Trail of Cthulhu* supplements.
He also work for French publishers and a local magazine.

When not working he is usually playing bass or trying to grow fruits and vegetables. The rotten one usually end up in his photo collection for his creations - perfect for a monster skin !

Simon Rogers

Simon Rogers is the managing director and co-owner of Pelgrane Press Ltd, publishers of the Dying Earth RPG and GUMSHOE system. He also runs ProFantasy Software Ltd, makers of Campaign Cartographer 3 and its add-ons. His job consists primarily of asking other people to do things for him with varying degrees of success.

INDICES
General Index

1930s
- Gender ... 11
- Technology ... 84

Abilities
- Buying ... 23-28
- Caps ... 26
- General ... 40-48
- Investigative ... 28-40
- List ... 24
- Psychic ... 17
- Refreshing See Refreshing

Ability Caps ... 26
Accounting (Academic) ... 28
Acid ... 68
Advancement ... 82
Adventure (Drive) ... 19
Adventures
- Difficulty Numbers ... 56

Advice See Tips
Aircraft Table ... 87
Alienist (Occupation) ... 9
Amateur Journalism ... 14
American Psychical Institute & Laboratory ... 16
American Society for Psychical Research ... 16
Anagnorisis ... 76
Anthropology (Academic) ... 28
Antiquarian (Occupation) ... 10
Antiquarianism (Drive) ... 19
Archaeologist (Occupational) ... 11
Archaeology (Academic) ... 28
Archery ... 43
Architecture (Academic) ... 28
Armitage, Dr Henry ... 70
Armor ... 62
Army ... 15
Arrogance (Drive) ... 20
Art (Technical) ... 30
Art History (Academic) ... 30
Artist (Occupation) ... 11
Artistic Sensitivity (Drive) ... 20
Assess Honesty ... 60
Assess Honesty (Interpersonal) 30
Astronomy (Technical) ... 30
Athletics (General) ... 40
Author (Occupation) ... 12
Bad Luck (Drive) ... 20
- and Stability Loss ... 75

Bargain (Interpersonal) ... 30
Benefits
- Definitions ... 27

Biology (Academic) ... 31
Blackjacks ... 61
blasted ... 77
Blasted ... 74
Blowguns ... 43
Boating See Piloting
Boston Society for Psychical Research ... 16
Boxing See Scuffling
Britain ... 6, 33
Build Points ... 23
- Dedicated Pool Points ... 54
- Restrictions ... 26
- Suggestions ... 26
- Trading ... 25
- Variants ... 24

Bureaucracy (Interpersonal) ... 31
Buying Abilities ... 23-28
Campaign Frames
- Restrictions on Abilities ... 24

Cars See Vehicles
Character Creation
- Buying Abilities ... 23-28
- Cthulhu Mythos not allowed 35
- Drives ... 19-23
- Example ... 18, 27, 47
- Example character sheet ... 49
- Fleeing ... 25
- Gender ... 11
- General Abilities ... 40-48
- Investigative Abilities ... 28-40
- Investigative Build Points ... 23
- Occupations ... 9-19
- Quick Reference ... 9
- Sex ... 11
- Suggestions ... 26
- Trading Build Points ... 25

Character Sheet ... 95
Chemistry (Technical) ... 31
Clergy (Occupation) ... 12
Close Range ... 66
Clues
- Assigning ... 55
- Core ... 53
- Example ... 52
- Following Leads ... 93
- Gathering ... 52
- Inconspicuous ... 55
- Who Finds Them? ... 55

Combat ... 60-68
Combat Veteran Benefits ... 15
Conceal (General) ... 40
Conflicts See Contests
Connections ... 31
Contacts ... 31
Contests ... 58-69
Cooperation ... 58
Cop Talk (Interpersonal) ... 32
Core Clue See Clues, Core
Core Concepts ... 7
Cover ... 64
Craft (Technical) ... 32
Creatures
- Speed vs Vehicles ... 85

Credit Rating (Interpersonal) ... 32
Criminal (Occupation) ... 13
Crookes tube ... 89
Cryptography (Academic) ... 34
Cthulhu Mythos
- Ability Use ... 74
- Sanity Loss ... 76
- Stability Loss ... 76

Cthulhu Mythos (Academic) ... 34
- Buying ... 35

Curiosity (Drive) ... 21
Cursed (Drive)
- and Stability Loss ... 75

Damage Table ... 61
Dedicated Pool Points ... 54
Demolition See Explosives
Denial ... 75
Detective See Police Detective, Private Investigator
Die Rolls ... 56
Difficulty Numbers
- and Insanity ... 74
- Assigning ... 57
- Car Chases ... 85
- for Contests ... 58
- Grenades ... 67
- Hit Threshold ... 61
- Injured ... 63
- Pulp ... 57
- Purist ... 57
- Sense Trouble ... 47
- Stability Test ... 69
- Stability Tests ... 72
- Story Pacing ... 56

Dilettante (Occupation) ... 13
Disguise (General) ... 41
Doctor (Occupation) ... 13
Drives ... 19-23
- and Stability ... 72
- Definition ... 19
- Hard Driver ... 73
- List ... 19
- Losing ... 75
- Soft Driver ... 73

Drives and Stability ... 72
Driving (General Vehicles) ... 85
Driving (General) ... 41
Duty (Drive) ... 21
Electrical Repair (General) ... 41
Electrical Repair (Technical) ... 41
Ennui (Drive) ... 21
Equipment ... 84-91
Equipment Table ... 90
Evidence Collection (Technical) 35

Experience Points 82
Explosives 67
Damage Table 67
Explosives (General) 41
Fainting 75
Falling 68
Fear Itself 17
Fighting 60-68, See Also Firearms
Armor 62
Cover 64
Damage Table 61
Death 63
Firearms 42
Free-For-All 61
Injury 63
Non-Lethal Damage 64
One Gun, Two Combatants 65
Rate of Fire 65
Scuffling 47
Weapons 48
Without An Ability 60
Filch (General) 42
Fingerprints 35
Fire 68
Firearms
Ammo 66
Lethal Option 62
Range 66
Rate of Fire 65
Reload 66
Table 88
Firearms (General) 42
Firearms Table 88
First Aid
Administering 63
First Aid (General) 42
flame-throwers 89
Flattery (Interpersonal) 35
Fleeing (General) 42
Buying 25
Flirting See Flattery
Folklore See Oral History
Follower (Drive) 21
Forensics (Technical) 35
Gender 11
General Abilities 40-48
Creating New Ones 45
List 24
Refreshing 80
Testing 56-58
Geology (Academic) 35
GUMSHOE
Clues 51
Purpose 6
Guns See Firearms
Hard Driver 73
Hastur 48
Healing See First Aid
Health
injuries 63
Refreshing 80
Health (General) 43
Hide See Conceal
History (Academic) 37
Hit Threshold 61
Hobo (Occupation) 14
Hordes 61
Howard, R E 7
Hypnosis (General) 43
Alienist 10
Impersonate See Disguise
Improvement Points 82
In the Blood (Drive) 22
Insane 74
Institut Métapsychique International 16
Institute for Brain Research 16
International Spiritualist Federation 16
Interrogation (Interpersonal) 37
Intimidation (Interpersonal) 37
Investigative Abilities 28-40
Benefits 53, 54
Contests, Investigative 59
Dedicated Points 54
Example Benefits 53
List 24
Refreshing 80
Using 52
Investigative Contests 59
Journalist (Occupation) 14
Languages (Academic) 37
Law (Academic) 37
Library Use (Academic) 38
Locksmith (Technical) 38
London Spiritualist Alliance 16
Long Range 67
Lovecraft, H P 6, 7, 11, 14, 18, 33, 35, 42, 70, 76, 77
Modelling Insanity 70
Machine Gun 65
Martial Arts See Scuffling
Mechanical Repair (General) 44
Medicine (Academic) 38
Mental illnes 81
Military (Occupation) 15
Money 84
Motorcycles 85
Mythos Shock 74
Navy 15
Near Range 66
Necronomicon 70
Non-Lethal Damage 64
NPCs
Deciding Abilities 66
Falling 68
Health Loss 63
Hit Thresholds 61
Interrogating Investigators 60
Vulnerability 62
Nurse (Occupation) 15
Occult (Academic) 38
Occupational Abilities 23
Occupations 9-19
Creating New Ones 12
Definition 9
List 9
Occupational Abilities 23
Officer 15
One Gun, Two Combatants 65
Oral History (Interpersonal) 39
Outdoorsman (Technical) 39
Parapsychologist (Occupation) 17
Parapsychology in the 1930s 16
Pharmacy (Technical) 39
Photography (Technical) 39
Physics (Academic) 39
Piggybacking 57
Pillars of Sanity 46
Damaging 75
Replacing 81
Pilot (Occupation) 17
Piloting (General) 44
Players
Tips 92-93
Point-Blank Range 61, 66
Poison 69
Police Detective (Occupation) 17
Preparedness (General) 45
Private Investigator (Occupation) 17
Professions See Occupations
Professor (Occupation) 18
Psychoanalysis (General Ability)
Treating Mental Illness 81
Psychoanalysis (General) 45
Refreshing Stability 79
Pulp
Adventure (Drive) 19
Alienist use Hypnosis 10
Ammo Use 66
Bad Luck (Drive) 21
Bullet-Resistant Clothing 65
Clegy and Exorcism 13
Clergy and Psychological Triage 13
Confidence 79
Drives 19
Duty (Drive) 21
Entymology 35
Explosives 67
Forensic Psychology 10
Hard-boiled Detective 18
Hypnosis (General) 43
Long Rate Fire 42
Lower Difficulty for Stability 72
Machine Gun Multiple Targets 66

Index

Mooks 61
NPCs die at 0 Health 63
Parapsycholgist Hypnosis ... 17
Physics and Alien Devices .40
Psychics and Alien Technology 40
Reveal Difficulty 57
Revenge (Drive) 22
Sanity Recovery 81
Sources of Stability 48, 81
Sudden Shock (Drive) 22
Symbol 7
Two-Handed Pistol Use 42
PulpExploding Cars 68
Purist
Ability Caps 26
Alienist (Occupation) 9
Ammo use..... 66
Antiquarian (Occupation)... 10
Antiquarianism (Drive) 19
Artist (Occupation)..... 11
Artistic Sensitivity (Drive) 20
Author (Occupation) 12
Big Reveal 76
Clergy and Psychoanalysis. 13
Dilettante (Occupation)..... 13
Doctor (Occupation) 13
Drives..... 19
Fainting 75
First Aid Restrictions 63
Health cap 43
In the Blood (Drive) 22
Journalist (Occupation) 14
Never Reveal Difficulty 57
No Advancement 82
No Sanity Recovery 81
NPCs Health like PCs..... 63
Occupation List 9
Police Detective (Occupation) 17
Professor (Occupation) 18
Stability Capped 48
Symbol 7
Range 66
Close 66
Long 67
Near 66
Point-Blank 66
Rate of Fire 65
Ratings 27
Reassurance (Interpersonal) 40
Recovering Abilities 79-82, See Also Refreshing
Refreshing 79-82
General Abilities 80
Health 80
Investigative Abilities 80
Reload 66
Resolution See Contests
Revenge (Drive) 22
Riding (General) 45
Round
Definition 62
Order of Action 61
Sample Character 49
Sanity
Ability Definition 46
and Stability 69
and Stability Explanation .. 70
avoiding loss 75
Cthulhu Mythos 74
Denial 75
Fainting 75
Losing 74
Loss, Table 76
Mythos Madness 77
Pillars of Sanity 46
Reaching 0 46
Recovering 81
Sanity (General) 46
Scholarship (Drive) 22
Scientist (Occupation) 18
Scuffling (General) 47
Sense Trouble (General) 47
Shadowing (General) 47
Shaken 74, 77
Shell Shock 77
Shrink See Psychoanalysis
Simple Searches 52
Skill 27
Sneaking 48, See Stealth
Social Class 33
Social Status See Credit Rating
Society for Psychical Research 16
Soft Driver 73
Sources of Stability 48
Stability 69-79, 77
Ability Definition 48
and Sanity 69
Blasted 74, 77
Cap On Loss 70
Difficulty Numbers 72
Drives 72
Insane 74
Loss, Table 76
Maximum Loss 70
Mental Illness 77
Mythos Madness..... 77
Refreshing 79
Refreshing 81
Roleplaying 72
Shaken 74, 77
Table of Losses 70
Test 69
Test, Example 70
Stability (General) 48
Stability Loss Table 70
Steal See Filch
Stealth (General) 48
Streetwise (Interpersonal) 40
Sudden Shock (Drive) 22
Suffocation 68
Technology..... 84-91
Temperature Extreme 68
Tests 56-58, See Also Contests
Example 57
Simple 56
Stability 69
The Ghost Club 16
Theft See Filch
Theology (Academic) 40
Thirst for Knowledge (Drive) 23
Tips
Players 92-93
Trading Points 25
Variant Builds..... 24
Vehicle Table 86
Vehicles 85-87
Aircraft 87
Damage 67
Motorcycles 85
Speed vs Creatures 85
Table 86
Weapons (General) 48
Wounds 63
Wrestling See Scuffling
Yig 69
Yog-Sothoth 34, 39, 52, 70